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ABSTRACT

Based on the questions of second language teachers concerning classroom practice, generated by mail survey in 1983, research on aspects of second language teaching and learning was reviewed and is summarized here. In each case, a question or questions are posed and a brief discussion follows, in layman's language and based on relevant research, with a brief bibliography. Questions address these issues: factors in foreign language enrollment and attrition; language learner motivation; foreign language aptitude; brain hemisphere research; treatment of errors in oral language activities; importance and methods vocabulary development; role of and methodology for grammar instruction; encouraging oral-aural skills; materials and methods for introductory reading instruction; cultural awareness; literature instruction; teaching multilevel classes; grouping techniques; pacing and time factors in language learning; language of instruction; comparing and selecting teaching methods; class size; foreign language study and standardized test performance; and foreign languages and careers. A list of selected specific questions and teacher concerns is appended. (MSE)

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ED 384 236

RESEARCH WITHIN REACH

Research-guided Responses to the Concerns of Foreign Language Teachers

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ACTFL/SCOLT Task Force on
Research in Foreign Language Education

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Table of Contents

Foreword vii

Acknowledgements xiii

Learner Variables and Language Acquisition

Attrition 3
Motivation 11
Aptitude 18
Brain Hemisphere Research 24
The Treatment of Errors in Oral Activities 29

Skill Development and Content

Vocabulary Acquisition 37
Learning Grammar 42
Aural-Oral Skills 49
Reading 55
Culture 63
Literature 75

Learning Environment

Multi-Level Classes 84
Grouping Techniques 90
Pacing and Time 97
Language of Instruction 103
Methodological Approaches 108
Class Size 114

Benefits of Foreign Language Study

Foreign Language Study and Test Scores 125
Foreign Languages and Careers 132

Appendix

List of Selected Questions and Teacher Concerns 139

Foreword

How This Document Was Developed

At the 1981 Annual Meeting of ACTFL in Denver, several discussions were held as to directions ACTFL should take for the next few years. During deliberations, five priority areas were singled out for special attention: teacher education, curriculum and materials development, public awareness, foreign language proficiency, and research. In cooperation with several regional language associations, ACTFL established task forces for each of the priority areas. SCOLT, the Southern Conference on Language Teaching, was chosen to deal with research, and a committee of ten was formed to carry out the charge of (1) identifying key areas for research in foreign language education; (2) gathering data on current research efforts; (3) reporting findings; and (4) guiding the profession toward achieving any recommended goals.[*]

We met together in the fall of 1982 at the SCOLT and ACTFL annual conventions to decide how we might best carry out the task force charge. Traditionally, authorities in our field have summarized research findings in state-of-the-art articles, which generally survey a large number of studies, synthesize results, and then speculate about some of the possible pedagogical implications of the results.

Well-executed summary articles serve a very useful purpose, for they present an overall interpretative view of a particular area or problem and contain numerous references that the reader can consult for additional information. However, articles of this type usually fail to have any significant impact on classroom teachers for two reasons. First, most of the studies in foreign language education are undertaken to satisfy the curiosity of and to benefit the investigators themselves, rather than to address concerns that actual classroom teachers have about language learning and pedagogy. Thus, results, while of interest to the investigators, have little to say about solutions to classroom problems that teachers consider important. Second, research findings are often inaccessible to teachers because they are reported in very technical language and are presented in a complicated format. Gaining familiarity with these conventions requires considerable training, and most teachers have neither the time nor the inclination for this training.

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[*] The original task force members were Howard B. Altman, Department of Classical and Modern Languages, University of Louisville; Kenneth Chastain, Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, University of Virginia; Thomas Cooper, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Department of Language Education, University of Georgia; Ernest Frechette, Department of Foreign Language Education, Florida State University; William Heflin, Jr., Department of Romance Languages, University of Tennessee; Carol Herron, Department of Modern Languages and Classics, Emory University; Elizabeth Joiner, Department of Foreign Languages, University of South Carolina; Frank Medley, Department of Foreign Languages, University of South Carolina; Genelle Morain, Department of Language Education, University of Georgia; H. Jarold Weatherford, Department of Foreign Languages, Georgia Southern College.

A New Way to Make Research Accessible

To bypass such problems that seem to be inherent in state-of-the-art reports, we decided to adapt to our needs an approach for reporting research that has been successfully used by experts in the fields of speech communication, reading, and mathematics education.[*] In short, we reversed the reporting process, for instead of identifying specific areas and topics, we decided first to discover from practitioners in the field what their most urgent questions were about foreign language learning and teaching. We then attempted to provide the answers by citing applicable research. Furthermore, we have tried to phrase our answers in straightforward language so readers would not be turned off by cumbersome, technical jargon.

How Questions Were Generated

To obtain a list of questions and teacher concerns, we conducted a mail survey during the winter of 1983. We sent out 230 letters to state foreign language supervisors and consultants, to editors of professional journals and state newsletters, and to the coordinators of the innovative high school programs ACTFL had selected for special recognition in *Award-Winning FL Programs: Prescriptions for Success.** In the solicitation letters we avoided a checklist format in order not to bias responses by suggesting areas, for we wanted to tap teachers for information about their individual professional concerns.

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[*] See, for example, *Research Within Reach: Oral and Written Communication* by David Holdzkom, Linda J. Reed, E. Jane Porter, and Donald L. Rubin (Washington, D.C.: NIE, 1982) and *Research Within Reach: Elementary School Mathematics and Reading* by Mark J. Driscoll and Phyllis Weaver with Fredi Shonkoff (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Department of Education, 1978).

Around sixty percent of the supervisors and high school chairmen responded, but returns from journal and newsletter subscribers were not as high. As can be seen from Table 1, we obtained a good balance of replies from various geographic regions in the country. The lesser number of replies from the Mountain States and Far West regions was probably due to the fact that fewer states are included in these regions.

Table 1.

Regions of Country Responding to Survey

Region	Number of Letter Replies
Northeast	26
South	21
Middle	22
Mountain States	10
Far West	8

After replies had been received, the letters were excerpted and representative questions and comments were typed on note cards and categorized according to topic. Table 2 summarizes the survey results and lists the issues that the teachers surveyed want more information about.

Selection of Questions To Be Answered

With the survey results in hand, we met to choose the questions we wanted to address. Two criteria governed our selection. First, we

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*See *Award-Winning FL Programs: Prescriptions for Success* by William D. Sims and Sandra B. Hammond (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co., 1981).

Table 2.

Summary of Teacher Concerns

Top Ten Issues

1. Testing and Evaluation
2. Promoting and Maintaining Interest in Foreign Language Study
3. Language Learning Theory
4. Oral Proficiency
5. Program Development
6. Multi-Level Classes
7. Instructional Aids: the Computer, Language Lab, and Videotapes
8. Teaching Culture
9. Student as Learner
10. Grouping Techniques

Other Concerns Appearing Frequently in Survey

1. Teaching Vocabulary
2. Teaching Grammar
3. Evalluating Teacher Competency
4. Interdisciplinary Instruction
5. Newer Methods
6. Teaching Reading
7. Effect of Class Size
8. FLES Programs
9. Foreign Language Learning After Graduation
10. Teaching Writing

did not handle the issues that seemed to overlap directly with the assignments of the other four task forces. Second, we included only those questions that were of interest to several respondents. We ended up with questions dealing with four major areas of foreign language learning and teaching: (1) learner variables and language acquisition; (2) skill development and content; (3) learning environment; and (4) benefits of foreign study. (See Appendix for a partial list of these questions.)

How Questions Were Addressed

Our main task, as we saw it, was to cite empirical studies in our answers wherever we could. That is, we were looking for data to support our replies. The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) aided us greatly in assembling a comprehensive bibliography, but when we took a closer look at many of the references, we were struck by the fact that many of these issues had not been researched in the traditional sense. There were few experimental or descriptive studies to cite in our discussions. Thus, at times, we were forced by necessity to rely on articles and reports that represent conceptual or opinion-based research rather than research of the empirical mode. We do not think that this detracts from our endeavor, for many of the questions that we received may be "unresearchable" with traditional methods.

We produced the first draft of this document spring 1984 during a working conference lasting several days. By having a large block of time together, we were able to share opinions, ideas, suggestions, and even references as we worked on our individual questions. We feel that the close interaction of the task force members at this stage helped us produce a more cohesive report than would have been the case had we been forced to compose our answers totally in the privacy of our studies.

We have followed a set format in structuring responses. First, questions pertaining to an issue have been combined and placed in a scenario context. Next follows a nontechnical discussion of relevant research. We have tried to keep the style light and "readable" and, above all, we have tried to maintain a practical focus in our discussions so that the classroom teacher can get something useful from them. At the end of each reply, we have included a short annotated bibliography of references that the interested reader may want to consult for additional information.

Suggested Uses

We think that there are many uses for *Research Within Reach* in addition to the obvious benefits accruing to foreign language practitioners. Some of these are outlined below.

(1) *Research Within Reach* can be used in in-service training sessions by foreign language supervisors to generate discussion and an exchange of ideas.

(2) This document can serve as a resource that supervisors, consultants, and department heads can refer to whenever they receive requests for assistance.

(3) Each topic can be published in district and state bulletins and newsletters.

(4) *Research Within Reach* can be used as instructional material in methods courses and seminars to sensitize prospective teachers to real problems encountered by their professional colleagues. In such an instructional setting, the annotated bibliography following each question can be most useful to students.

(5) The document can serve as a guide for possible dissertation topics and perhaps for new directions for future research in foreign language education. Perusal of the questions listed in the Appendix quickly reveals the real concerns of teachers and might spawn new research that would be meaningful to them.

A Final Note

Research Within Reach is a unique project. It represents an extended cooperative effort between a regional and a national foreign language association, as well as cooperation among the various universities at which the task force members are employed. In addition, and most importantly, the thrust of the project is aimed at bridging the gap between university and public school endeavors. We hope and expect that the methodology and procedures employed here will serve as a model for the creation of a closer union between research and its implementation in foreign language teaching.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the financial support we received from several sources. First, the Southern Conference on Language Teaching and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages were generous in their support of our project. We would also like to thank the Florida Foreign Language Association for its help. Above all, we wish to acknowledge the Exxon Education Foundation which made the creation of this document possible. We would also like to thank David Holdzkom of the Research and Development Interpretative Service for his assistance in the initial planning stages of this volume and for his permission to use the title, *Research Within Reach,* for our project. Kim Mallett and Elisabeth Gareis were very efficient proofreaders and made many helpful editorial suggestions during various stages of the manuscript prepparation. Finally, we wish to give Anita Smith special thanks for typing the manuscript and cheerfully making numerous changes along the way.

Thomas C. Cooper,
Chair ACTFL/SCOLT Task
Force on Research in Foreign
Language Education

Learner Variables and Language Acquisition

Attrition

Question

The primary problem that foreign language teachers in my school face is the recruiting and retention of students. We need information on why students begin the study of a foreign language and why they continue. Why do they drop out? What instructional practices produce fear, anxiety, boredom, discomfort? What effects do various correction, testing, and instructional techniques have on students? In short, what can we as teachers do in our classrooms to promote and maintain a strong enrollment?

Discussion

Almost all of the studies that have been done to determine why high school students take a foreign language reach the same conclusion: about 50 percent of these students enroll to satisfy college entrance requirements. Others enroll because they want to know more about the culture, or because of peer pressure, or because of some other encouragement they receive through counselling, parental advice, teacher recommendation, and the like. Once students enroll in the class, however, the overwhelming majority hope to learn to *speak* the language above all else. As a result, those teachers who promote their classes as places where people learn to communicate in the language and then live up to the promotional publicity, normally enjoy strong enrollments.

Since half of our students enroll to satisfy a two-year college entrance requirement, it is not surprising that after two years many of the students choose not to continue. Yet during those two years, the teacher has ample opportunity to "sell" the learners on the desirability of a second language. By looking at studies of students who have dropped out of foreign languages, it is possible to identify five recurrent student perceptions and three teacher characteristics that seem significant. One or more of the following factors may be the cause for a student to decide to terminate his study*:

(1) The initial course in the foreign language has been difficult for the student, and he feels either that he cannot learn the language or that the future effort demanded will be excessive.

(2) The results of the first experience with the foreign language have neither measured up to the student's expectations nor to the "promises" of the teacher-recruiter. In some instances it may be a case of the student's having an unrealistic perception of what the results will be or of grossly overestimating his own ability to perform.

(3) The student has no clear-cut goals in general and is, thus, not motivated to pursue in-depth study of *any* subject.

(4) The student feels that his "style" of learning and study is not compatible with what he is expected to do in the classroom.

(5) The student has been "advised" not to continue, either by peers, parents, counselors, other teachers, or even in some instances by the language teacher.

The three teacher characteristics that seem to be mentioned most often by dropouts are:

(1) The teacher is disorganized to the point that the students do not feel that there is any order to the course. The course of study is either nonexistent, or it does not reflect the ends that the students desire from the study.

(2) The teacher's human relations skills are not adequate to inspire students to strive for success in the study of foreign language.

(3) The methods of evaluation used are not an accurate measure of the student's functional ability in the language.

Of course, there are numerous other reasons why students do not continue, but since these eight seem to be the most frequently cited, they will be the ones addressed in this rather short discussion.

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*In cases where the use of both third-person pronouns (he or she, her or his) is cumbersome, we have used the masculine form; but where possible, we have tried to avoid any sexist stereotyping.

First, it appears that the teacher is the key to most successful language programs. Students enroll in the course expecting the content to be well-organized, the material to be presented effectively, and the tests to be a fair and accurate measure of what the student is able to do in the language. But the teacher has an additional responsibility. Most students come to the foreign language classroom with little or no experience in the study of a foreign language, although they can use their own language with varying degrees of effectiveness. Furthermore, the strategies that they have used in other classes just don't seem to work in the foreign language class. And since most students have, at best, a nebulous concept of the complexity of language, either as a system or as a medium of communication, they must depend completely on the teacher to help them develop effective strategies for mastering the new subject. In essence, the teacher must "prepare" the student for language learning. The "preparation" usually involves reassuring the student that it *is* possible to learn a second language, that they can do it, and that errors are a natural part of the learning process. It should be pointed out to the learners that they will be developing skill both in understanding the language (receptive competence) and in using it (productive competence). The teacher must make a conscientious effort to conduct activities that will reinforce the student's sense of accomplishment, such as early listening comprehension and reading exercises that will enable the student to draw on the native language both as a key to meaning and as an early medium of response. Total Physical Response (TPR) activities are excellent for use both in the beginning and in more advanced classes.

One of the great fears that a student has is that announcements, instructions, and assignments will be made in the target language, hence misunderstood. The teacher should stress that this will not be the case and should reinforce the statement either by using the native language in these instances or by making certain that everyone *has* understood the directions in the target language. Some teachers reserve the last five minutes or so for questions and answers in English, again to reassure the students.

Sometimes, the very act of soliciting students for the foreign language classroom has a negative result. In recruiting, it is imperative that the teacher not "overstate" the outcomes that the student can expect from the course. One guide toward the development of outcome statements that would be meaningful to the students might be the ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines. These narrative descriptions of the various levels of language proficiency are succinct and written so that they are easily understood. The teacher should take care, however, to modify these statements so that they accurately reflect the actual expected results of each course.

In the event the students have no direction in general with respect to long-range personal academic goals, some class time should be used to talk about goal-setting, planning, and the like. In this area the school counselor should be a good resource and might even conduct the session. But regardless of who directs the activity, it should be done. It is simply unreasonable to expect students to be able to work toward a long-range goal in the foreign language class if at the outset they have no goals. And although our task may be to teach a foreign language, we are, in a larger sense, responsible for the overall intellectual and personal development of our charges.

As instruction progresses, the students need to develop new strategies of learning that are conducive to skill-getting and skill-using. Because learners are able to recall factual data for other classes does not necessarily mean that they can sight-read new material in a second language or adapt a learned response to a new situation. As mentioned earlier, students must be *shown* how to study second language vocabulary and structures, and how to guess intelligently in an effort to communicate effectively in the new tongue.

The teacher should constantly be alert for indications that specific activities produce excessive anxiety or that they touch on topics that are too personally disquieting to the students. These exercises should be avoided. Instead, high-interest tasks, or those that are challenging, yet rewarding, should be used. Class work should be varied and should include a small number of mechanical drills and a moderate number of meaningful ones, with the majority of class time devoted to communicative drills and activities.

By mechanical drills, we mean structured activities in which the teacher is in total control of the possible responses to a cue, usually by asking students to repeat verbatim or to make specific grammatical substitutions. Moreover, students need not understand the cue to respond correctly. At the meaningful level, students are given a choice of answers, however, the teacher remains in tight control of the activity as there is only one right answer. During a communicative drill, students are free to respond from previously taught variations, and the teacher, as well as classmates, do not know in advance how a particular student will respond to the cue or situation.

In more formal testing situations, correction and scoring should focus either upon the specific elements to be evaluated (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, etc.) or upon the more global characteristics of function, content, and accuracy as is done in the oral proficiency interview, reading comprehension test, or writing quiz. The critical elements appear to be that the students know *what* is being tested and that they be familiar with the format used for the test. In both classroom activities and in formal testing situations the students need to have attention focused upon what is *right* with their performance, so that they will be aware of the progress that they are making as a result of their efforts. The need to reassure the students that they are improving cannot be overemphasized, even though at times that improvement may seem infinitesimally small!

As a semester or year ends, one of the objectives of the teacher should be to have the students willingly enroll in the next course in the sequence. Periodic comments by the teacher on content of future courses, skills to be developed, interesting topics to be discussed, and the like are critical to the development of student interest in new courses. Discussion of the carry-over value of the study of language in other areas of the curriculum is important, so that students come to realize that the study of a language is not just an end in itself, but is an important element in an individual's intellectual development; and as their interests begin to develop, the teacher should take care to encourage students to follow them. By doing so, students are more likely to resist negative pressures to conclude language study prematurely. The teacher who is open, honest, and willing to listen to students can have a tremendous influence on adolescent learners. Most of us who are in foreign language teaching today can trace our own interest back to a teacher who took the time to listen and who then inspired us to pursue our dreams. The Lebanese poet, Kahlil Gibran, may have given us the key to attrition when he wrote that the wise teacher is the one who "does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind."

Summary

The consensus of most researchers and teachers would probably be that the teacher has more to do with the success or failure of a language program than does any other factor. There seems to be no problem with either enrollment or attrition in courses where the teacher is well prepared, both in language and in pedagogy, and where organization leads to the development of student proficiency. This list of qualifications presumes that the teacher is also sensitive to the personal and educational needs of the student and is skilled in working with adolescents. Given the teacher who is willing to attend to the interests of the class and to plan an academically sound course that takes into account these interests, language programs will flourish. In fact, there seems to be no particular material, no particular method, no particular teaching technique that outweighs these humanistic elements in the successful foreign language course. Neither do there appear to be any other factors that will compensate for ineffective or inconsiderate instruction. Hence we are, as teachers, largely dependent upon our own efforts and performance with respect to recruiting and retaining students for our language classes.

Suggested Reading

ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines (1982). Hastings-on-Hudson, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

These guidelines, which are both generic and language-specific, address speaking, listening, reading, writing and culture. They are designed to guide curriculum and materials development as well as to provide a graduated sequence of learning goals for teachers and students.

Asher, J. (1982). *Learning Another Language through Actions*. Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks Productions.

Describes the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach in detail and gives numerous sample classroom lessons.

Higgs, T. V. (Ed.). (1984). *Teaching for Proficiency, the Organizing Principle*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

This volume in the ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series offers the most thorough treatment to date of the issues and implications

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that the proficiency movement has for the classroom and the profession. Classroom activities, culture, and testing are addressed, among a number of other topics.

Oller, J. W., Jr., & Richard-Amato, P. A. (Eds.). (1983). *Methods That Work*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

The editors have drawn together an excellent collection of articles from some of the most perceptive authorities in foreign language methodology. The ideas and techniques discussed, as well as the four chapters addressing a more general methodological overview, will be extremely helpful, both to the novice and to the more experienced teacher.

Papalia, A. (1970). *Selected Factors of Language Learning and Language Attrition*. Western New York Council of Foreign Language Supervisors. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 121 099)

This study reports on a survey of twenty-eight school districts and identifies several factors contributing to attrition in those districts.

Schulz, R. A. (1978). *Survey of Successful Undergraduate Foreign Language Programs in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education. Final Narrative Report*. (Grant No. EH-27125-77-67). Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities.

This study was conducted to identify successful foreign language programs in undergraduate institutions of higher education and to examine those factors which were felt to have contributed to their success. The study attempted to find patterns and approaches to foreign language instruction which might be generalized, reproduced, or adapted by other institutions to generate student interest and improve teaching and learning.

Torres, E. E., et al. (1970). *Foreign Language Dropouts: Problems and Solutions. An Examination of the Reasons Why Students Do Not Continue Foreign Language Instruction and a List of Suggested Solutions to the Problem*. New York: Modern Language Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 043 262)

A comprehensive investigation into the reasons behind the crucial problem of the student dropout in foreign language programs with a focus on seven related areas: (1) student, (2) teacher, (3) administration, (4) counselor, (5) parent, (6) community, and (7) teacher training.

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Walz, J. C. (1982). *Error Correction Techniques for the Foreign Language Classroom*. Language In Education: Theory and Practice, 50. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

This book offers a good collection of techniques for the correction of oral and written errors. The author discusses both the strategy and the implication of various approaches.

Motivation

Question

Many of my students do not seem terribly interested in learning another language. How important is motivation for success in foreign language learning? How can a teacher improve students' motivation?

Discussion

The bane of every language teacher's existence is the "unmotivated student." We feel charitable toward the "poor student who tries hard," but the "underachiever who just doesn't apply himself" earns our scorn. It is probably inaccurate to refer to learners as "unmotivated." A more accurate statement might be that *all* learners are motivated to *some* degree just by virtue of their being in the classroom in the first place, but that different learners react positively to different substantive content in foreign language learning. Some learners relish the challenge of solving grammar problems, and the harder the better. Other learners revel in a study of their target culture counterparts and eagerly seek information on what it means to be a like-aged student in, for example, Mexico or France. Still other students seem "motivated" by a desire to understand what their relatives are talking about at home when they use the ancestral language among themselves. The point here is that learners probably start off in a state of positive motivation for learning — though not necessarily for learning the same content — and become "unmotivated" as a result of an unpleasant experience or series of experiences with the subject matter, the teacher, or both.

Motivation — or lack thereof — has become a central issue in education today and in foreign language education specifically. Motivation is related to the factor of *perseverance* which has been found to be one of the crucial determinants of a learner's success in the classroom. It is also related to the notion of ***attitude toward learning***; each student holds a set of attitudes toward foreign language study, toward the target language itself, toward the target culture and people, toward the language teacher, and indeed toward the process of education in general. A student begins the study of a foreign language with a set of attitudes fostered by his or her parents and/or peer group, as well as by the student's own prior educational or linguistic background. Learners do *not* commence language study as a "blank slate" attitudinally; they have certain expectations (realistic or false) and certain preconceptions (accurate or fanciful) which they bring with them into the classroom on the very first day. The foreign language learning experience itself may alter those attitudes — for better or for worse.

Among the many dimensions on which learners differ is the dimension of ***motivational orientation***. Extensive research with foreign language learners worldwide has validated the existence of two major types or orientations of motive. Usually called *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation, they have been identified in learners of all ages around the globe.

Integrative motivation characterizes the learner whose interest in foreign language learning is interpersonal and intercultural. This is the learner who, for a variety of possible reasons, is eager to take part in the target cultural experience, to visit or even live in the target culture, to interact closely with the people who speak that language, to explore their values and lifestyles, and to understand their patterns of living. It characterizes the learner as well who is desirous of becoming involved with target cultural residents living within the learner's own country, as for example those "Anglo" students in the American Southwest who befriend and interact closely with Mexican-Americans, and who are accordingly motivated to learn Spanish. The integrative motive has been found to be a highly powerful motive. Some studies have suggested that it is a *sine qua non* for the development of a high level of language proficiency. Although the existence of and proximity to a bicultural or multicultural environment is not a prerequisite for the development of integrative motivation in learners, this orientation does seem most prevalent in those settings where there is interaction among native language and target language speakers.

Instrumental motivation characterizes the learner who pursues the study of a foreign language for pragmatic reasons. This is the learner who sees specific *extrinsic* value in language study, whether it be the need to fulfill the language qualifications for a job, or the desire to read technical or other materials in the original language, or even the desire for self-improvement. The instrumentally motivated learner bears less of an "attachment" to the target language and culture. For such learners, language study serves as a means to an end, and may not necessarily be a welcomed means. This is especially obvious in the case of students who grudgingly fulfill a "language requirement" in secondary school or college. What begins as an unwelcome experience, however, may evolve into a source of pleasure and profit for the learner, whose motivational orientation may also switch as he or she comes in contact with the language and people of the target culture. The instrumental motive is a powerful one in many parts of the world, especially for students of English as a second or foreign language.* In many countries, a knowledge of English is a requirement for employment in numerous jobs. As the *lingua franca* for much of the world's commerce, English is widely taught and avidly studied around the globe. But even in major American cities which house significant ethnic-linguistic minorities, a knowledge of another language may be the criterion which assures an individual a position, or denies him one. A casual look at the "Help Wanted" section of any major American newspaper will reveal the number of positions which specify language competence as one of the qualifications.

For many secondary school students, especially in apparently "un-

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*The distinction between "foreign language" and "second language" has to do with the environment in which the language is being learned. A "second language environment" is one in which it is possible to interact with speakers of that language and with the target culture. This characterizes, for example, the learning of French in much of Canada, or the learning of Spanish in the American Southwest or parts of the Southeast. Where few or no "native speakers" of the target language reside and where contact with such people is artificial or nonexistent, the target language is a "foreign language." One can distinguish — and indeed *should* distinguish — between the goals and techniques of teaching a "second language" (which may actually be someone's third or fourth language) and those of teaching a "foreign language."

icultural" sections of the U.S., it is hard to uncover either integrative or instrumental motives which characterize and shape their learning. This does not imply that such learners are "unmotivated." Rather, it reveals the existence of a possibly quite large number of students of foreign languages whose motivational orientation is neither interpersonal nor pragmatic. Their orientation has been termed "linguistic hobby," and this describes those students who pursue foreign language study because they have friends in the class, because they have heard nice things about the teacher, because the language class comfortably fits their schedule, or "because it's there!" Such students seem driven by process rather than product in their language study. They stick with foreign language courses as long as the study of the target language remains enjoyable, even if they have no expectations of "using" the language upon graduation. Since they have — at least initially — little or no *intrinsic* attachment to foreign language study, their willingness to persevere, especially beyond any "requirement" phase, is directly related to the satisfaction and enjoyment which they derive from the experience, rather than from any inherent value they perceive in knowing the language.

Not only do learners differ in their motivational orientations, but also in the *sources* of their motivation. For some, the drive to master another language comes from within. This type of learner is *intrinsically* interested in language study because it fills an inner need. Others derive their motivation from *extrinsic* sources, such as parental pressure, peer group pressure, job requirements, and the like. The impact of parental attitudes toward the target language and culture should not be minimized. Research has shown that in many settings the parents' attitude toward the target language and culture has a very strong impact on a student's likelihood of developing good pronunciation in the target language, and indeed on his or her willingness to persevere in language learning. For many students, however, the peer group constitutes the strongest source for motivation. The "student grapevine" has always been a powerful motivator for course selection. (How many of us have had students in our language classrooms who signed up for the course — or for that section of the course — only because they had a boyfriend or girlfriend in the room?)

What impact does motivation have on language learning? Research has suggested that motivation is likely to be one of the strongest influences on achievement in the classroom. The highly motivated learner can compensate for lower aptitude (and receives, as was suggested above, the full support and assistance of the classroom teacher). Some have suggested that motivation may account for as much as 33% of the variance in achievement in the foreign language classroom; that is, fully a third of the difference between success and failure can be explained by how much a learner wants to succeed. Others have attributed even more power to motivational factors. Along with aptitude for foreign language learning, motivation constitutes a phenomenon with which teachers have to deal. But unlike aptitude, motivation is not constant and is very much influenced by what teachers do, how the curriculum is organized, how the learner perceives the value of the course and his or her relationship to the teacher, and other extra-curricular factors (such as health, schedule, other priorities, etc.).

Numerous "attitude scales" and "motivational orientation scales" have been developed to allow teachers to ascertain the complex set of attitudes and values which their students hold toward the target language and culture and toward the study of another language and people. The volume by Jakobovits indicated below contains a lengthy appendix of such attitude and motivation measurement scales. Teachers can easily adapt any of these to meet the conditions of their own students and language programs. In considering curriculum reform or the development of new programs, a language teacher would be wise to ascertain the degree of student support for the proposed changes (by means of an anonymous attitude survey) before undertaking all the work necessary to alter the language program.

Finally, the impact of the classroom language teacher on the motivation of students should not be underestimated. Especially for those students whose motivation seems casual — those who fall into the "linguistic hobby" category discussed above — the teacher's behavior and style of interaction can make a real difference in exciting them to further or deeper study, or in causing them to drop out as quickly as possible. The successful teacher of foreign languages is one who makes learning successful for his or her students, by what-by whatever means possible. Different students will be motivated by different instructional strategies. The more we get to know our students and what makes them "tick," the better we can know how to make the process of foreign language learning as satisfying as possible for them. This is the first job of the teacher-as-motivator.

Summary

Motivation has been found to be crucial for success in foreign language learning. Among the different motivational orientations which learners may hold are ***integrative motivation*** (the interpersonal motive) and ***instrumental motivation*** (the pragmatic motive). Some learners seem lacking in both of these styles and are classified as "linguistic hobbyists." That is, they take a foreign language because it is fun, because their friends are in the room, because it fits their schedule, or for some other non-intrinsic reason. Motivation can be measured and determined by the many attitude and motivation measurement scales which exist and which teachers can adapt to meet their own needs. The classroom teacher's own impact on a learner's motivation is extremely significant, especially for those students who remain in language study only so long as it provides them with a source of satisfaction.

Suggested Reading

Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

The definitive report on a series of studies carried out on learner motivation and attitudes in foreign language study. A somewhat technical volume, but with much practical information.

Grittner, F. M. (Ed.). (1974). *Student Motivation and the Foreign Language Teacher: A Guide for Building the Modern Curriculum*. Selected papers from the 1973 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co.

These conference proceedings focus on a variety of ways of building and strengthening student motivation for foreign language learning.

Jakobovits, L. A. (1970). *Foreign Language Learning: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of the Issues*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Useful for treatment of attitudes toward foreign language study. The appendix contains numerous scales to measure attitudes and motivation in classroom language learning.

Myers, P. J. (1979). Motivational Factors and Student Retention in School Foreign Language Programs. In D. P. Benseler (Ed.), *Teaching the Basics in the Foreign Language Classroom: Options and Strategies*. Selected papers from the 1979 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (pp. 21-30). Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co.

This article presents a new approach to measurement of language learner motivation and shows the significance motivation has as a factor in learning and retention.

Walker, J. L. (1976). The Student View: Attitudes toward Foreign Language Learning. In G. A. Jarvis (Ed.), *An Integrative Approach to Foreign Language Teaching: Choosing Among the Options* (pp. 129-50). Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co.

A survey article of research on student attitudes toward foreign language study, toward language curricula, and toward the value of foreign languages. Contains a large bibliography.

Aptitude

Question

I would find it helpful, especially for accelerated courses and for grouping purposes, to know which of my students have a genuine aptitude in foreign languages. Is there any reliable indicator of foreign language aptitude?

Discussion

Extensive research in the last several decades has led to the development of several tests designed to predict success in foreign language learning. The most prominent of these include Carroll and Sapon's *Modern Language Aptitude Test* (MLAT, 1959) and *Elementary MLAT (1967)*, *Pimsleur's Language Aptitude Battery* (LAB, 1966), and the *Defense Language Aptitude Battery* (DLAB, 1976), which was developed by Petersen and Al-Haik for use in the military. These researchers believe that they have isolated those characteristics which successful language learners in a formal classroom setting possess and that it can be demonstrated by testing whether a given student has them.

The MLAT and the LAB have both been widely used for selecting students for certain programs and for predicting the degree of student success in learning a foreign language. The DLAB has been employed in screening students for the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. The MLAT, which is the best known and most widely used test, and the LAB have consistently proven to be very effective predictors when measured against criteria such as second language course grades, teacher ratings, and second language proficiency scores.

According to Carroll, language aptitude applies to any foreign language, and individual differences in aptitude exist among native speakers of every language in the world. He feels that language aptitude consists of several relatively independent abilities, of which three have been most clearly defined. These are "phonetic coding ability," "grammatical sensitivity," and "inductive ability." Phonetic coding involves the ability to identify and store in long-term memory new language sounds or strings of sounds. Grammatical sensitivity is defined as the individual's awareness of the syntactic patterns of sentences and of the grammatical functions of elements in a sentence. This knowledge of grammatical rules is, however, not ordinarily a conscious process, but rather a system of habits. Inductive language learning ability is defined as the ability to examine language material (spoken or written) and discover patterns of correspondences and relationships involving either meaning or grammatical forms.

Pimsleur's view of foreign language aptitude is similar, yet his test has a few significant variations. To him the two most important predictors of success in second language learning are verbal intelligence and motivation. His test consists of six parts: (1) grade point average; (2) interest (the student's desire to study a foreign language); (3) the student's knowledge of English vocabulary; (4) language analysis (ability to manipulate grammar analytically); (5) sound discrimination (involving foreign sounds); and (6) sound-symbol association (ability to associate sounds correctly with their written form).

Even though these tests have achieved good results in predicting the success of a given student in foreign language study, there is not complete agreement on the significance of this predictive ability with regard to a theory of language learning. Some linguists do not even subscribe to the view that there is such a thing as foreign language aptitude. Neufeld, for example, feels that second language learning is intrinsically no different from first language learning, and that the ability to learn any language is an innate trait which neither decreases with age nor varies significantly from individual to individual. The difference between child and adult language learning success resides, according to him, in social and psychological factors not dependent on psycholinguistic abilities.

There is general agreement that factors other than aptitude do play a significant role in foreign language learning. Social and psychological factors most certainly influence the success of foreign language acquisition, a fact which is easy to believe but harder to prove. It is especially difficult to establish exactly what these factors are and to what extent they influence learning. Strongly held positive attitudes on the part of the student can help, whereas powerful negative ones can make the job of the foreign language teacher a nearly impossible one. Some of the other factors which have been identified as important contributors to student success (or lack of it) include the following: (1) anxiety level; (2) personality type (for example, reserved versus outgoing); (3) creativity; (4) the learner's perception of and attitude toward the target culture; (5) degree of identification with the people whose native tongue is being learned; (6) strength of desire to learn the foreign language; (7) extent of parental encouragement; (8) the student's value system regarding success and achievement; (9) the student's perception of the potential usefulness of the language; (10) orientation to the target culture; (11) degree of self-confidence of the learner; and (12) willingness to take risks.

Various research efforts have also attempted to ascertain the relationship between language learning ability and what our society generally refers to as "intelligence" with some interesting results. Success in learning a foreign language does not seem to equate exactly with IQ, although there is some overlap, especially with regard to verbal intelligence. The areas of listening comprehension and interpersonal communication skills correlate least with IQ level. Especially at the more advanced stages of language learning, the effects of the attributes of the "A" student (primarily hard work and intelligence) seem to be less significant than in many other subject areas. These findings suggest that even students with lesser academic abilities are effectively able to acquire certain interpersonal communication skills in a second language.

Other predictors of success in foreign language learning have been identified. One of these is musical ability, and the evidence from studies suggests that there is some relationship between such ability and success in learning a foreign language, especially in the area of pronunciation.

A word of caution needs to be inserted at this point about the use to which aptitude testing and similar judgments are put. Whereas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the study of foreign languages was advocated, in many instances required, because it was felt that foreign language study trained the analytic and reflective faculties and strengthened mastery of one's native tongue, by the 1920s the forces of the "mental discipline" school were replaced by the view that the primary purpose of education was to provide all students with specific skills which could be utilized in their careers. Since it was felt that few young people would be employing foreign language skills in their jobs, foreign languages were soon looked upon as electives for highly intelligent students who were planning to go to college, and their place in the curriculum was taken over by courses in family life, social studies, shop, home economics, etc.

Unfortunately, this myth that foreign language study is only for the elite was born, nurtured, and grew to maturity over the following years. Even today it retains numerous adherents, including many among our own ranks, despite the abundance of excellent arguments against this view. For one thing, in our ever-shrinking world with expanding international contact around the globe, foreign languages are becoming more and more valuable for careers. Secondly, the growing internationalization of the United States and expanded travel both to and from our country make the possession of foreign language skills ever more helpful and pleasurable. Thirdly, today's language experts no longer subscribe to the theory of the individual compartments or faculties of the mind believed in by the nineteenth century philosophers and maintain that the working of memory, reason, observation, and creativity are interrelated. They tend to agree that our mental capacities can be trained to be more efficient, and there is much evidence to support the notion that foreign language study improves the cognitive functioning of the brain. Fourthly, even those students who may show, on the basis of an aptitude test, that they are not the best-suited candidates for a foreign language class have the ability to learn a foreign language, especially communication skills, and can profit from such a study. We do not wish to support any elitist theory of foreign language study.

Summary

Certain tests, such as the *MLAT*, the *Elementary MLAT*, the *LAB*, and the *DLAB* have proven to be quite accurate in predicting success in learning foreign languages. Some linguists, however, argue that the ability to learn a language is an inherent trait which does not vary from individual to individual and that the rate of language learning varies only because of social and psychological factors. Common sense as well as research indicate that numerous other factors, such as desire, personality, and attitude toward the target language and culture, do play a substantial role in the successful mastery of a foreign language. Intelligence is, of course, a factor, although it does not seem to correlate highly with success in language learning, especially in the area of acquiring communication skills. This fact and others give adequate reason to reject an elitist theory of foreign language study, because virtually anyone who has successfully acquired a first language can learn to communicate in a foreign language.

Suggested Reading

Carroll, J. B. (1973). Implications of Aptitude Test Research and Psycholinguistic Theory for Foreign Language Teaching. *Linguistics, 112*, 5-13.

Contains information about foreign language aptitude and Carroll's discussion of aspects of aptitude.

Carroll, J. B. (1981). Twenty-five Years of Research on Foreign Language Aptitude. In Karl C. Diller (Ed.), *Individual Differences and Universals in Language Learning Aptitude* (pp. 83-118). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Very informative about the history of aptitude testing and the development of currently used tests.

Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

A major work by two researchers who have devoted much effort to attitude research.

Genesee, F. (1976). The Role of Intelligence in Second Language Learning. *Language Learning, 26*, 267-280.

Reports on an interesting study which found that IQ does not correlate perfectly with the ability to learn a foreign language, especially with regard to certain communicational aspects of the foreign language.

Herron, C. (1982). Who Should Study a Foreign Language: The Myth of Elitism. *Foreign Language Annals, 15*, 441-449.

Gives information about and arguments against the elitist theory of foreign language study.

Krashen, S. D. (1981). Aptitude and Attitude in Relation to Second Language Acquisition and Learning. In K. C. Diller (Ed.), *Individual Differences and Universals in Language Learning Aptitude* (pp. 155-175). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Very informative on both attitude and aptitude.

Neufeld, G. G. (1979). Towards a Theory of Language Learning Ability. *Language Learning, 29*, 227-241.

Gives arguments against the concept of aptitude in foreign language learning.

Pimsleur, P. (1969). Knowing Your Students in Advance. *The Modern Language Journal, 53*, 85-87.

Describes the makeup of Pimsleur's aptitude test.

Wesche, M., Edwards, H., & Wells, W. (1982). Foreign Language Aptitude and Intelligence. *Applied Psycholinguistics 3*, 127-140.

Contains important recent information regarding language aptitude and intelligence.

Brain Hemisphere Research

Question

We hear a lot lately about brain hemisphere research and its relationship to learning in general. Does this research have any applications for language teachers? Do any of the newer methodologies claim to be right-brain approaches? Does Krashen's distinction between language acquisition and language learning have anything to do with right-brain versus left-brain learning?

Discussion

As educators we are naturally interested in how the brain works and in the possibility of making use of what is known about brain functioning to help students learn more efficiently. From our point of view, brain research would seem to offer the enticing possibility of a solid body of knowledge on which to build a theory of language instruction. A word of caution is in order here, however. While it is true that great strides have been made in the area of brain research, we must remember that new findings are continually being made and that our knowledge of brain functioning remains imperfect at best. For this reason, this discussion should be considered a progress report rather than a definitive answer to your question.

To realize how thinking about brain function has changed in recent years, one need only reread articles that appeared around the time of the first split-brain studies. In such articles there was a tendency to speak of the left and right hemispheres as if they were separate and independent entities, each with a specific function. Language, for example, was thought to be entirely the province of the left (or logical) brain while the arts were believed to be located in the right (or artistic/intuitive) brain. Subsequent studies have shown that in normal people the two hemispheres work together, with each complementing the other. This is quite apparent in the case of language.

While it appears that oral expression is chiefly a function of the left brain, both sides of the brain can comprehend language. The right brain comprehends a large number of concrete nouns and verbs, while abstract nouns and propositions appear to be the province of the left brain. The right hemisphere also enables hearers to recognize the intonation patterns and to interpret the emotional overtones and non-literal meanings of the language that reach their ears. Without this additional processing, only literal meanings would be understood. It is clear, then, that for the great majority of people language is a whole-brain activity in which the right and left hemispheres play complementary roles.

Because normal language use involves both brain hemispheres, it would be misleading to speak of right-brain methods. There are, however, at least two prominent methods that make use of specific strategies designed to activate the right brain and to engage it in the language learning process. A complete discussion of these methods is beyond the scope of this article; it is, however, worth noting that both methods emphasize listening comprehension and both claim to result in accelerated learning.

The key feature of Asher's Total Physical Response method is an oral command or a chain of commands to which students respond physically by doing something. Asher had observed that children learning their first language were able to respond to commands that they would not have been able to produce. Research also suggests that response to a whole body command such as "stand up," "turn around," or "crouch like a boxer" involves the right brain. Even persons whose left brain processes are disordered and who have only a limited understanding of the spoken language are able to react when given such commands.

Lozanov's suggestopedic method would appear to activate the right brain by other means. One of its central features is the concert session, a time during which the students relax and listen to the teacher read aloud in the foreign language against a background of baroque music. It is possible that the meter of the music as reflected in the oral reading may enhance comprehension since there is some evidence that metered language activates the right hemisphere and that the brain best comprehends metered language broken by pauses.

The above methods both seem to be compatible with the theory of second language acquisition developed by Stephen Krashen. This theory, which accords a prominent place to listening, consists of a number of hypotheses, the most widely-known of which is no doubt the Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis. Krashen uses the term *acquisition* to refer to those subconscious processes involved in acquiring a first language. The child is not aware that he is acquiring language, but rather thinks he is doing something infinitely more pleasant such as listening to a bedtime story. He acquires language without working at it or even paying much attention to it. This is not the case with language *learning*, which is conscious attention *to* and knowledge *about* language and which is developed by formal instruction. Krashen views learning and acquisition as two separate and independent ways of developing ability in a second language.

Typically, we provide our students with many opportunities for learning or for learning about language. According to Krashen, much of this effort could be better spent. He believes, for example, that we should present students with large amounts of *comprehensible input* to aid them in *acquiring* the language. In his theory, comprehensible input is represented by the formula (i + 1), that is, input containing structures that are a bit beyond the student's present level of comprehension. It is by trying to understand the message embedded in this comprehensible input that the learner acquires the language, according to Krashen.

The suggested readings at the end of this discussion provide additional information about Krashen's theory. While this theory does seem very compatible with methodologies such as the Total Physical Response approach and suggestopedia, it is not limited to one or two approaches. Rather, Krashen seems to endorse any method that conforms to certain teaching guidelines based on the research findings that have contributed to the development of his theory. He advocates, for example, an initial silent phase during which the student does much listening but does not speak. Referring to concrete objects can aid in making the new language understandable to beginning students during this phase. Other classroom practices recommended by Krashen are a relaxed attitude toward errors once students have begun to speak and the use of techniques designed to put students at ease and to protect their egos.

Whether these classroom practices can be grafted onto those currently in use is an interesting question. Certainly, the materials that are prevalent today are designed to promote speaking, writing, and reading. Typically, listening material occurs only incidentally as the question to be answered or the model sentence to be transformed. Can it be that we have gotten the cart before the horse and that we need to reverse this situation before we can really move forward in language teaching? All the answers are not yet in, but the questions raised by Krashen and others are too important to be ignored.

Summary

The present thinking about brain research and language ability emphasizes the role of both hemispheres in language comprehension. Two methods that focus on comprehension are Asher's Total Physical Response method and Lozanov's suggestopedic method. There is reason to believe that these methods make use of specific strategies that activate the right brain and engage it in the learning process. Many features of these methods seem compatible with Krashen's theory of language acquisition; however, Krashen himself does not seem to view the acquisition/learning distinction as being based on a right brain/left brain distinction. What Krashen's theory and the results of recent brain research would seem to argue for is a critical role for listening comprehension in the teaching/learning process. If this is proved to be true, we may look forward to significant changes in foreign language texts and instructional strategies in the years to come.

Suggested Reading

Asher, J. J. (1982). *Learning Another Language through Actions:* Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks Productions.

Describes the Total Physical Response approach and presents numerous sample classroom lessons clearly and in great detail.

Blakeslee, T. R. (1980). *The Right Brain.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Discusses the mysteries of the human brain clearly and concisely. Contends that the right brain has been undereducated by our schools and offers suggestions for improving learning by involving the whole brain.

Krashen, S. D. (1983). Applications of Psycholinguistic Research to the Classroom. In C. J. James (Ed.), *Practical Applications of Research in Foreign Language Teaching* (pp. 51-66). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Presents in simple, straightforward language five interrelated hypotheses concerning language acquisition; suggests practical applications of these hypotheses to classroom instruction.

Restak, R. M. (1979). *The Brain: The Last Frontier.* New York: Warner Books.

Discusses thoroughly, yet comprehensibly, the functioning of the human brain as it affects language, health, and personality. Presents a holistic view of the brain.

Winitz, H. (Ed.). (1981). *The Comprehension Approach to Foreign Language Instruction.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Contains thirteen articles that cover the theory and development of comprehension-based or whole-brain approaches. Some are rather technical, but others are very practical and include sample teaching materials.

The Treatment of Errors in Oral Activities

Question

At the last in-service day for foreign language teachers in our school district, we discussed how the trend away from audiolingualism and its habit formation approach to foreign language learning has contributed to a renewed interest in the use of language for communication. Instead of being expected to produce error-free utterances in the foreign language as was the case in the 1960's, today's students are encouraged to communicate meaningful ideas. As teachers, we are reminded by our foreign language chairperson that people make errors when learning any new skill, but that they learn from their mistakes when they receive constructive and supportive feedback. How can we help our students learn from their mistakes? Which errors should we correct?

Discussion

Over the last two decades, the issue of why students make errors has undergone considerable examination. According to the audiolinguists, there were two major reasons why students made oral errors: teacher's fault and/or interference from the student's first language. For example, it was believed that certain teacher behaviors tended to induce errors: not giving clear directions, not using the target language consistently, poor lesson planning, etc. Today, research suggests that teacher-induced errors and interference errors from the native to the target language are only two of several types of errors found in students' speech.

Other sources of error now commonly referred to are overgeneralization, performance errors, markers of transitional competence, and strategies of communication and assimilation. Teachers need to understand what each of these terms means in order to diagnose accurately where the students' problem areas lie. Overgeneralization refers to an error caused by extension of language rules to areas where they do not apply. An example of this kind of error made by a student learning English as a second language is: "Last night, Mary watched T.V., listened to her stereo, played with friends, and *singed.*" In this case, the student overgeneralized the rule of adding *-ed* to form the past tense in English. Performance errors are systematic errors that occur as the result of memory lapses or fatigue. They often result from carelessness on the part of the student. Markers of transitional competence are errors that result from a natural and perhaps inevitable developmental sequence in the second language learning process. For example, beginning students often hesitate and stumble when asked to repeat dialogue sentences as the memory load is great. Also, intermediate level students may make errors of transitional competence when asked to choose between the preterite and imperfect tenses in French and Spanish; more practice is needed. Finally, strategies of communication and assimilation are errors resulting from an attempt to communicate in the target language without having completely acquired the structural forms or lexicon necessary to do so. Whenever students engage in freer conversational activities (role-playing, skits), the possibility of communicative errors increases.

Having examined some of the sources of errors, some general implications can be drawn pertaining to the questions of which errors should be corrected and by whom. Research suggests that teachers are encouraged not to overcorrect, to classify errors on a scale of high priority for correction, to be sensitive to the frustrations of their students in their attempts to communicate, and to guide instead of dominate the error correction process.

Researchers are now indicating that three kinds of errors should have high priorities for correction: errors that impair communication; errors that have stigmatizing effects upon the listener; and errors that students produce frequently with respect to a particular pedagogical focus. Errors that generally impede the intelligibility of a message include the misuse of a preposition or pronoun, the deletion or insertion of a word, or inadequate lexical knowledge. These kinds of errors are called global errors. On the other hand, errors that generally do not cause misunderstanding of a message are local errors such as gender mistakes, lack of subject-verb agreement or adjectival agreement. While global errors should be corrected, many studies suggest that in open-ended exercises, local errors may remain uncorrected as long as students get across personal meaning.

Several studies have been published that relate to the second kind of errors teachers need to correct — errors that may stigmatize the learner in front of a native speaker. Two Spanish studies revealed that native Spanish speakers understood but reacted negatively to not using the infinitive after a preposition, not using *estar* in the progressive format, not using the past subjunctive in "if" clauses, not using *ser* with a noun, not using *gustar* correctly, not using the correct form of the irregular preterite, not using *para/por* correctly, and not using relative pronouns correctly. In a French study, native speaker respondents showed the greatest tolerance for errors of tense usage and agreement and the least tolerance for errors of verb forms and pronouns. In particular, French native speakers were particularly bothered by the regularization of irregular future stem verbs, the regularization of irregular past participles, the confusion of auxiliary verbs in the past tense, the confusion of object pronouns and indirect ones, the omission of relative pronouns, and the confusion of the formal and familiar *(vous/tu)* forms. Native speakers in German related that using the right word is the most important aspect of language use — more important than using the right case ending. In fact, the order of decreasing tolerance for errors was: vocabulary, verb morphology, word order, gender confusion, phonology, and case endings.

In addition to errors that stigmatize the learner or impede communication, researchers stress that errors relevant to a specific pedagogical focus also demand teacher correction. For example, if a teacher has spent two weeks discussing how to form the future tense in French, an oral error based on its formation should be corrected. These categories of errors lead us to the issue of how to correct them.

Although no chain of empirical research exists to substantiate whether one particular strategy reduces errors significantly, evidence in some studies suggests that indirect procedures have proven to be more effective than direct ones in which the teacher immediately interrupts a student and supplies a correct response. Indeed, a discovery approach to error correction might help students to make inferences about the target language and aid them in fixing this information in their long-term memories. In other words, instead of supplying a correct grammatical form, the teacher can remind a student of the relevant rule or recue the question. Language specialists today propose that once students are made aware of their errors, they may learn more from self-correcting with teacher guidance than from the teacher's supplying the appropriate response.

Summary

The literature and research on the correction of oral errors is still somewhat speculative. Yet there has been a firm rejection on the part of many foreign language educators of the obsessive concern with correcting *every* error that characterized audiolingual instruction. Virtually gone are the days of distilled lists of "do's and don't's" for error correction. Today there is a more positive perspective toward trial and error behavior in the foreign language classroom. Our teaching strategies need to reflect this change in theory. Planning a positive emotional climate will help students to perform correctly. When appropriate, a teacher should react to a student's utterance with a positive reward, e.g., a verbal remark ("bravo" or "sehr gut"), a smile, or even a simple nod that acknowledges understanding of the utterance as well as its grammatical accuracy. Instead of responding to a student error with "no," a partial reward such as, "Oh, you went to the movies last night, great! But watch out for your past participle form," will encourage students to want to communicate an idea. At the same time, this approach helps them learn from their errors through self-correction whenever possible.

Suggested Reading

Burt, M. K., & Kiparsky, C. (1972). *The Goofticon: A Repair Manual for English*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

A discussion of an error taxonomy to classify errors in communicative terms of global errors and local ones.

Chastain, K. (1980). Native Speaker Reaction to Instructor-Identified Student Language Errors. *The Modern Language Journal*, 64, 210-15.

An investigation exploring native speaker reactions as to comprehension and acceptability of student language errors.

Delisle, H. (1982). Native Speaker Judgment and the Evaluation of Errors in German. *The Modern Language Journal*, 66, 39-48.

An investigation of the effects of errors on native speakers of German.

Galloway, V. (1980). Perceptions of the Communicative Efforts of American Students of Spanish. *The Modern Language Journal*, 64, 428-33.

An attempt to examine native speaker perceptions of oral communicative proficiency.

Guntermann, G. (1978). A Study of the Frequency and Communicative Effects of Errors in Spanish. *The Modern Language Journal*, 52, 249-53.

Native speaker interpretations of errors typical of American Peace Corps volunteers who had reached an S-1 level of proficiency on the Foreign Service Institute Interview in Spanish.

Hendrickson, J. (1978). Error correction in Foreign Language Teaching: Recent Theory, Research, and Practice. *The Modern Language Journal*, 62, 387-98.

An excellent review of the literature on error correction in which the author addresses five major questions: (1) Should learner errors be corrected? (2) If so, when? (3) Which learner errors should be corrected? (4) How should they be corrected? (5) Who should correct these errors?

Herron, C. (1981). The Treatment of Errors in Oral Activities: Developing Instructional Strategies. *The French Review*, 55, 6-16.

Some practical ideas on how students can self-correct during oral activities.

Piazza, L. G. (1980). French Tolerance for Grammatical Errors Made by Americans. *The Modern Language Journal*, 64, 422-27.

Parisian students rated errors typically made by American students learning French in oral and written modes.

Politzer, R. L. (1978). Errors of English Speakers of German as Perceived and Evaluated by German Natives. *The Modern Language Journal*, 52, 253-61.

German teenagers examined errors typical of American students learning German and ranked them according to severity.

Skill Development and Content

Vocabulary Acquisition

Question

I have been teaching foreign languages for several years. At this point experience with grammar-translation, audio-lingual, and cognitive techniques has taught me a great deal about teaching the grammar and sounds of language, but I really know very little more about vocabulary acquisition now than I did when I began teaching. I do not even know whether or not it is important that students learn vocabulary, at least more than a minimum number of words. If so, which words should they learn? And how can they learn these words most easily and most quickly?

Discussion

In the past, foreign language learning has been viewed as a process primarily of learning the grammar of the language and secondarily of learning the sounds of the language. Thus, relatively minor importance has been attached to vocabulary and, consequently, little consideration or research has been devoted to its acquisition.

More recently, however, both theoreticians and researchers have become more interested in the importance of vocabulary as the focus of foreign language learning has shifted from the language forms themselves to their communicative functions. With this new perspective has come an awareness of the importance of vocabulary and an increased interest in its acquisition. Theorists now maintain that among the three major components of language — grammar, sounds, and vocabulary — vocabulary is the most important. That is, from the point of view of the information carried, the word is normally more important than either its ending, its position in the sentence, or its pronunciation. Researchers studying the extent to which language errors of foreign language learners interfere with communication agree that such is the case.

Stress on communication leads to the conclusion that textbook authors and teachers should choose words that will be most useful as foreign language students communicate with native speakers. Researchers in Europe have compiled lists of the most commonly-used words in English, French, German, and Spanish. Beyond the elementary level, vocabulary functionality is more specialized. Researchers have studied the language needs of language users, and authors have compiled vocabulary lists related directly to their specific language needs. The result has been language courses for special purposes such as those for medical personnel.

Some teachers have responded to the desirability of providing useful vocabulary by incorporating student-chosen vocabulary into the course. These teachers encourage students to ask how to say the foreign language words they want to use. Words considered to be of general value are written on the board for students to copy into notebooks and to learn.

How do students·learn vocabulary? There are many possibilities: the keyword method, paired learning, rote rehearsal, recognition of cognates, identification of familiar roots, rhyme, alliteration, spelling, etc. There is, however, little conclusive research evidence to support any particular approach. Different learners seem to use different methods at different times and in different circumstances.

Some researchers conclude that thinking of a familiar English word that sounds like the foreign language word and forming a mental image of the word that relates it to the meaning of the foreign word improves vocabulary learning. For example, students learning the Spanish word "peso" might think of the English word "pay-so" and imagine the money received on pay day. Others recommend that vocabulary lists be learned by the stimulus-response pairing of native language and foreign language words. Cognitive theorists believe that these pairs are learned better if students make them more vivid through the use of mental images.

Still others maintain that words are learned in related systems called semantic fields. They believe that students can learn connected groups of words more easily and that they remember them longer.

Another approach is to teach students to infer the meaning of words in context while reading. These word-recognition skills are enhanced by teaching students to utilize script activators, cognates, word families, and context to comprehend and learn vocabulary as they read.

Vocabulary acquisition research, limited as it is, has indicated to us that we can do more to teach vocabulary than give students a bilingual list of words or a text and a dictionary. First, we need (1) to present vocabulary in context; (2) to be sure by means of demonstration, visual aids, synonyms or antonyms, paraphrase, context, or translation that the students indeed know the meaning of the word; and (3) to teach students to identify and improve their strategies for learning vocabulary. With regard to the latter, using mental images, including the word in a sample sentence, relating the word to other words both in the native language and in the foreign language, and incorporating words into a semantic field are recommended. Second, we should see to it that students have an opportunity to use the word to express meaning in questions and answers, discussions, role-playing, and problem-solving activities. Researchers say that to a great extent memory depends on the "depth of processing." A script activator enables students to anticipate what they will encounter in a dialogue or reading based on their knowledge of the world. Practice using the words should be spread over a period of time.

Summary

Many theorists, researchers, and teachers who emphasize the communicative function of language now believe that learning the vocabulary is as important in foreign language learning as learning the sounds and the grammar. Researchers have compiled lists of the most commonly used words for elementary foreign language students and of specialized vocabulary for specific learner needs. Students learn vocabulary in many different ways, but the general concensus seems to be that students can be taught to improve their vocabulary-learning abilities by using mental images, by studying words in related groups, by acquiring word recognition skills, and by using the words in a meaningful context.

Suggested Reading

Adams, S. J. (1982). Scripts and the Recognition of Unfamiliar Vocabulary: Enhancing Second-Language Reading Skills. *The Modern Language Journal*, 66, 155-59.

In this study the author investigates the use of script activators to improve students' inferencing skills.

Celce-Murcia, M., & Rosensweig, F. (1979). Teaching Vocabulary in the ESL Classroom. In M. Celce-Murcia & L. McIntosh (Eds.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (pp. 241-257). Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

The authors examine research related to vocabulary learning and outline practical steps to take in teaching vocabulary.

Cornu, M-A. (1979). The First Step in Vocabulary Teaching. *The Modern Language Journal*, 63, 262-72.

The author applies what is known about semantic fields to vocabulary teaching and learning.

Hatch, E. M. (1983). *Psycholinguistics: A Second Language Perspective*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

The author surveys from a theoretical perspective what is known about teaching vocabulary.

Howlett, F. G. (1979). Words, Words, Mere Words. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 35, 636-53.

In this article the author describes how to implement the "experiential approach" to vocabulary learning.

Levin, J. R., et al. (1979). Assessing the Classroom Potential of the Keyword Method. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 71, 583-94.

The authors report on the results of six studies conducted to investigate the effects of using the keyword method in a classroom situation.

Maiguashca, R. U. (1984). Semantic Fields: Toward a Methodology for Teaching Vocabulary in the Second-Language Classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 40, 274-97.

The author discusses weaknesses of current approaches to teaching vocabulary and outlines the semantic approach.

Turner, G. (1983). Teaching French Vocabulary: A Training Study. *Educational Review,* 35, 81-88.

Results indicate that memory-improvement strategies improved students' ability to learn vocabulary.

Learning Grammar

Question

I am a high school foreign language teacher. Our school district has adopted a communicative competence-oriented foreign language program. I am concerned, however, that many teachers and most textbooks still stress the teaching of grammar. Is this really necessary? We find that our textbooks still contain grammar exercises in the form of drills. Are drills still considered effective strategies for grammar instruction and do we need to emphasize rules or is practice enough? If indeed grammar remains important, what is the best sequence for teaching it — inductively or deductively? Finally, can you suggest some techniques for teaching grammar to make it more interesting and above all communicative?

Discussion

The adoption of a foreign language program which emphasizes communicative goals has occurred quite frequently in the past decade as researchers stress the importance of developing communicative competence in our students. More recently, however, goal statements, such as the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines,* are reintroducing objectives of grammatical accuracy. There appears to be a genuine concern for not only whether a student can communicate but also how well, with form receiving emphasis as well as content.

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*The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines are the result of a project funded by the International Research and Studies Program of the U.S. Department of Education. The guidelines, published in 1982, consist of both generic and language-specific descriptions of proficiency that range from a survival level to adult professional-level skill. These graduated descriptions are available from the ACTFL Materials Center, P.O. Box 408 Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706, for French, German, and Spanish.

The related issue raised by you of *how* students acquire accuracy in a foreign language remains open to debate. Some researchers maintain that accuracy will develop naturally over time as the student hears and understands language that is comprehensible, relevant, and not grammatically sequenced. This theory runs contrary to the more pervasive and traditional view that grammatical rules facilitate language acquisition in that they act as focussing devices. They help students manipulate and create with language in an efficient fashion as well as avoid the inefficient testing of false hypotheses about how a particular language functions. Until more conclusive evidence exists to support the former contention that grammatical accuracy in foreign language acquisition develops without attention to form, we recommend supporting the position that a concern for accuracy is important for the eventual development of proficiency beyond that of an elementary to intermediate survival level.

Any formula that tries to address the problem of how students acquire accuracy is concerned with the question: Is foreign language learning involved with creative problem-solving and open-ended expression or habit formation and structured drills? Today many researchers have suggested that the answer is *both* and that teachers interested in developing functional communicative ability in their students should strive to maintain a balance among habit formation, rule analysis and communicative practice. In turn, this balance indicates three basic parts to a grammar lesson: a repetition or intensive drill stage, an explanation phase, and a transfer phase which proceeds from structured to open-ended personal expression.

The precise ordering of these three parts will depend on the theoretical bases subscribed to in the basic text and/or by the teacher. For example, if a teacher chooses to present a certain grammar point deductively, the explanation (rule analysis) stage will precede the drill (repetition) phase. If the teacher uses an inductive approach, students will repeat eight to ten examples of the new linguistic pattern before they are asked to formulate the rule underlying the pattern. While it is true that the controversy surrounding an inductive presentation versus a deductive one remains unresolved, research does indicate that both methods for ordering the grammar lesson should be followed by a transfer stage in which students try to apply their new generalization about the language in analogous sentences to express personal meaning. This last stage aims to help students advance from repetition to freer speech and to aid teachers in the checking of students' progress.

What should be done in the classroom to make these three parts of the grammar lesson interesting and meaningful practice sessions? For the intensive repetition stage, the pattern drill remains an effective strategy for teaching the observable, fixed interrelationships of a language such as verb endings or the placement of adjectives and pronouns. Drills constructed around a central theme or context have the double value of focussing students on form *and* of preparing them to use these forms in subsequent communicative practice. Some more recently published texts do contain such pre-communicative, contextual drills:

Bon voyage! This summer the following students are going to travel. Say to which city they are going and what they are going to visit there.*

Modèle: Paul (Paris/le Centre Pompidou)

Paul va à Paris.
Il va visiter le Centre Pompidou.

1. Jacques et Henri (Londres/le British Museum)
2. nous (Rome/le Vatican)
3. toi (New York/le musée d'Art Moderne)
4. moi (Paris/Notre Dame)
5. vous (Moscou/le Kremlin)
etc.

This type of mechanical yet contextual drill on the formation of the near-future tense in French and review of the basic forms of the irregular verb, "to go," logically leads into a structured but open-ended discussion of where each student in the class is going that summer and what he or she is going to visit. The nature of the vocabulary built around the central theme of sightseeing also lends

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* From Valette and Valette, *Contacts*, Houghton Mifflin, 2nd ed., 1981, p. 76.

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itself to cultural acquisition. Students could easily comment upon the architectual differences between the British Museum and the Centre Pompidou once they have been shown visual representations of the two.

When conducting a drill, teachers may use repetition of the rote type (straight repetition after the teacher's model), but repetition will become more meaningful if it occurs in a question-answer sequence, if pictures or accompanying sentences are used as faded cues, and if it moves toward more open-ended conversation. An example of a progressively more communicative question/answer sequence follows:

1. *Fullest cue:*	Teacher teaches the answer and then asks the question with the answer in it.
Teacher:	I am going to the gym after class.
Students:	I am going to the gym after class.
Teacher:	Are you going to the gym after class?
Students:	Yes, I am going to the gym after class.
2. *More faded cue:*	Either-or question.
Teacher:	Are you going to the bank or to the gym? (T. shows picture of gym to students.)
Students:	I am going to the gym.
3. *More faded cue:*	Visual cue.
Teacher:	Where are you going? (Holds up picture of gym.)
Students:	I am going to the gym.
4. *More faded cue:*	Accompanying sentence.
Teacher:	To lift weights . . .
Students:	I am going to the gym to lift weights.
5. *Most faded cue:*	General question (personalized)
Teacher:	Really after class, where are you going?

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Student 1: Really, I am going to the bank.
Student 2: Not me, I am going to the gym like you.
Student 3: I am going to the cafeteria.

This last general question is an important one to position at the end of a mechanical/meaningful drill since students are asked to respond in a realistic, personal way from the eight to ten variations on the structures previously taught in the drill. This kind of structured question/answer sequence has as its goal the eventual development of creative expression which is the basis of this teacher's foreign language program.

During the rule analysis or focussing stage, many individuals encourage introducing the grammatical explanation by a model sentence with which students are already familiar so that they will understand that the pattern is both useful and actually used. This sentence could be lifted from a previously learned dialogue, drill, or reading. Some individuals have found it effective in the explanation phase to provide at least three written examples of the rule (in addition to the model sentence) in contextual sentences on the board or on an overhead transparency. Key elements can then be underlined in colored chalk or pen for emphasis and review.

In the transfer phase, students are expected to create examples of the recently repeated and analyzed pattern. New vocabulary in context enters naturally at this stage. This step reinforces the pattern, creates a grammatical generalization, and serves as a diagnostic learning check. This step may occur in an oral or written mode. A written activity has the advantage of changing routine and providing as a break as well as reinforcement to oral work. Transfer exercises include personal question/answer work, small group activities, games, completion activities, role-playing, etc.

Researchers then generally agree that if grammar is to be taught on a recall level, that is, where students can use a grammatical pattern and understand the underlying rule, all three steps are important. However, it is important to remember that some grammatical patterns may be taught only at a recognition level (e.g., literary tenses, double-object pronoun replacement). If this is the case, then analysis plays a secondary role to functional practice in recognizing forms and reacting to their use in listening and reading.

Summary

Research has demonstrated the danger of leading students too prematurely into open-ended activities for which they are not adequately prepared. Prior to communicative activities, students need to practice new linguistic elements in structured drills and to experiment with applying their new grammatical hypotheses in analogous situations. Most researchers of the grammar issue concur that drills should follow a contextual sequence in which meaning gradually plays a greater role. The primary difference between contextualized and noncontextualized drills is that the former link form with meanings or ideas that we might want or need to convey in the real world. Although it is tempting to sacrifice structured practice in favor of creativity and communication, accuracy is an important element of the communicative process when the objective is oral proficiency. Of course, the fusing of grammar work with communication needs realistic situations outside the classroom as well, in which learners are exposed to unrehearsed language in use. Language clubs, interviewing native speakers, study abroad experiences, watching a foreign film, attending a summer foreign language camp are not frills but indispensable parts of any program. They help to guarantee that students learn not only about the language but that they also use and live the language in a direct and individual way.

Suggested Reading

Birckbichler, D. W. (1982). *Creative Activities for the Second-Language Classroom*. Language in Education: Theory and Practice, 48. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

A handbook of ideas and exercises for personalizing grammar instruction and for meaningful reinforcement activities.

Fischer, R. (1979). Inductive-Deductive Controversy Revisited. *The Modern Language Journal*, 63, 98-105.

A review of research that supports both inductive and deductive presentations of grammar and suggestions for appropriate application of each.

Higgs, T., & Clifford, R. (1982). The Push Toward Communication. In T. Higgs (Ed.), *Curriculum, Competence, and the Foreign Language Teacher* (pp. 57-79). The ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series, 13. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbok Co.

A discussion of the position that if accuracy is one of the objectives of instruction, teachers need to fuse the teaching of grammar with communicative activities at the beginning and intermediate levels of language acquisition.

Knop, C. (1979-80). *Teaching A Second Language: A Guide for the Student Teacher.* Language in Education: Theory and Practice, 3. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

An explanation and demonstration of how to structure a grammar lesson including drills, rule elicitation, and transfer/learning checks.

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.* New York: Pergamon Press.

A discussion of the position that although student utterances at the beginning and intermediate levels are not always grammatically accurate, accuracy will develop over time as the student hears and understands comprehensible, interesting, relevant language. Krashen maintains that speaking fluency cannot be taught but that it will emerge naturally in time.

Omaggio, A. (1984). The Proficiency-Oriented Classroom. In T. Higgs (Ed.), *Teaching for Proficiency, the Organizing Principle* (pp.43-84). The ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series, 14. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

A complete discussion of the debate over teaching for accuracy in the foreign language classroom. This article offers many ideas for contextualizing grammar drills and suggests various formats for grammar work that is personalized and communicative.

Rivers, W. (1981). *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

A review of research on the teaching of grammar with an explanation of how to teach grammar effectively using various formats of drill and skill-using activities.

Seliger, H. W. (1979). On the Nature and Function of Language Rules in Language Teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 13,* 359-68.

An argument in favor of the use of pedagogical rules as cognitive focussing devices for students to facilitate language acquisition.

Aural-Oral Skills

Question

My students seem to want primarily to be able to speak and understand the language, so we listen to tapes and do a lot of oral drill with books closed. I've even tried to get conversations going about things I think they'd be interested in, but they seem to flounder and make lots of errors in unstructured situations. How can I get them to talk more? Also, does listening comprehension develop right along with speaking or do I need to have some practice just in listening?

Discussion

When we talk about the students' ability to produce oral language, it is useful to distinguish between linguistic proficiency and communicative proficiency. Linguistic proficiency refers to the ability to manipulate the grammar and to reproduce the sounds of the language while communicative proficiency refers to the ability to use the language to send and receive messages, i.e., to express and interpret meanings. These two abilities are not unrelated, but they are not identical. At one time language teachers believed that sufficient oral practice involving the grammar and phonology of the language would equip their students to function in the real world. This has been shown to be a false assumption, and your own experience reflects the experience of many teachers who have found their students unable to make a successful transfer from controlled to spontaneous speech.

A number of research studies describe classroom activities and procedures that have been shown to help the student learn to use the foreign language as a vehicle of expression. These studies indicate that if we are to produce students who can use the language for purposes of real communication, we must involve them in language practice that has one or more of the following characteristics: (1) the students must be aware of the meaning of the words they are saying; (2) they must be engaged in sending and/or receiving messages; (3) they must be motivated to speak; and (4) they must practice language in situational contexts. Much oral language practice that occurs in textbooks in the form of drills and exercises fails to meet these criteria.

What, then, constitutes communicative language practice and how does one recognize it? As you examine your textbook exercises, you should ask yourself several questions. First, does this exercise focus on grammatical form or on meaning? Second, is the student's response or answer predictable? Third, does this exercise involve using language as it is used in real life? Communicative language practice tries as much as possible to embody language as it is used in the real world, where language is meaningful and unpredictable. Such practice may take the form of questions to which the students must respond truthfully, games, simulations of real-life situations and role-play. Work in pairs or small groups is often more effective than whole-class practice in that the students are afforded more time to talk and can do so in a relaxed, conversational atmosphere.

Although there is strong evidence that classroom activities such as those described above are necessary to bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world, there is still some debate concerning such considerations as *how much, how soon,* and even *how.* In recent years a functional-notional approach has been increasingly mentioned as a means for organizing communicative activities in an efficient and productive way. Functions refer to the purposes for which language is used and the link between function and activity should be a close one. For example, if the function or purpose were "finding out information about past events," an appropriate activity would be to give students lists of information for them to gather by asking questions of others.

Closely linked with the concept of communicative proficiency is the attitude that error is a natural part of the language learning process and that not all errors should be immediately corrected. One school of thought tells us that we should value our students' errors because they reflect the strategies that the students are using to acquire the language. According to this school of thought, comprehensibility is the only criterion for the acceptability of student-produced speech. If a native speaker would understand it, it's correct. Recently, however, there have been a number of studies that indicate that native speakers do not perceive all errors equally and that even perfectly comprehensible speech can be irritating. Furthermore, there is a growing belief that if students are allowed to make too many errors, these errors may fossilize and become very difficult to eradicate from their speech.

It goes without saying that the errors made during fast-paced, highly-structured drills with predictable responses should be corrected swiftly, but kindly, as the focus in this case is on accuracy rather than fluency or meaning. A good rule to follow during the part of class devoted to practice resembling real life uses of language is to respond to what the student is trying to say in much the same way that you would respond to a non-native speaker of English who was trying to express himself to you. It is important to let the student know that you value what he is saying even if it isn't said perfectly. Corrections can be made subtly through prompting, rephrasing, and other indirect means that mothers typically use with children who are learning to talk. When students are working together in groups, the teacher can circulate and make notes of errors that can later be used as the basis for more structured language practice.

It has been shown that, when children acquire their first language, comprehension precedes production; i.e., the child is always able to understand more than he or she can say. This fact has led a growing number of foreign language teachers and researchers to speculate that we need to include more listening practice in all classes but especially at the beginning level. Frequently, the language that children hear and understand takes the form of oral commands to which the child must respond by doing something. Such language forms the basis of Asher's Total Physical Response method and was the inspiration for the audio-motor unit developed by Elkins, Kalivoda, and Morain. Listening practice of this type can be called communicative since a message is sent and the student must do something to show that the message has been understood. Since this response does not have to take the form of speech, students are capable of participating in communicative listening practice before they are able to express themselves in words. Other listening activities that invite a physical response on the part of the student include drawing something described by the teacher and responding to oral questions by raising one's hand. Activities like these enable students to communicate non-verbally even before speech develops.

The non-verbal component of communication is very important, with perhaps as much as sixty-five percent of meaning attributable to non-verbal messages. It is desirable, then, to acquaint the students with how native speakers of the language are likely to react to gestures, facial expressions, and the like. In some cases, students could be asked to respond to verbal statements with gestures that indicate their comprehension. When playing roles, they should be encouraged to use some of these same gestures and to position themselves as close to (or as far from) their partner as a native speaker of the language would do under similar circumstances. Several inventories of gestures are available, and visual aids such as photographs and films enable students to see non-verbal messages being exchanged in real or simulated situations. In this way, they can become aware of the fact that communication is more than a mere verbal exchange.

Summary

Getting students to talk in the foreign language requires moving outside and beyond the textbook. It involves providing the students with something to say and a reason for speaking. It also implies a somewhat more relaxed attitude toward errors, at least toward those errors made when the student is trying to use the language creatively to express personal meanings. Students who are constantly corrected eventually stop talking. In order to participate in question-answer practice and other types of aural-oral activities, the student must be able to understand what he or she hears. There is also reason to believe that listening should be practiced on its own, perhaps with non-verbal rather than verbal responses to begin with.

Suggested Reading

Brault, G. J. (1963). Kinesics and the Classroom: Some Typical French Gestures. *The French Review,* 36, 374-82.

Presents commonly-used French gestures with suggestions for classroom use.

Green, J. R. (1973). A Focus Report: Kinesics in the Foreign Language Classroom. In *Foreign Language Research: A Book of Readings* (pp. 132-143). Chicago: Rand McNally.

Discusses ways that gestures may be incorporated into classroom practice.

Guntermann, G., & Phillips, J. K. (1982). *Functional-Notional Concepts: Adapting the FL Textbook*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Lists common purposes of listening and speaking with examples of speaking skill purposes in a communicative act. Presents functional-notional concepts as a means of organizing classroom activities.

Hendrickson, J. M. (1978). Error Correction in Foreign Language Teaching: Recent Theory and Practice. *The Modern Language Journal, 62*, 387-98.

Reviews numerous studies of error analysis and error correction. Considers comprehensibility of errors as the main criterion for correction.

Joiner, E. G., & Westphal, P. B. (Eds.) (1978). *Developing Communication Skills*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Contains practical articles that describe activities and techniques useful for teachers who want to include more oral communication in their classes. Activities include games, simulations, role-plays and other types of language practice that involves the exchanging of messages.

Kalivoda, T. B., Morain, G., & Elkins, R. (1971). The Audio-Motor Unit: A Listening Comprehension Strategy That Works. *Foreign Language Annals, 4*, 392-400.

Describes a technique based on sets of thematically related commands that students perform individually or in groups as directed by the teacher or a tape recording.

Linder, C. (1977). *Oral Communication Testing*. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co.

Presents communication testing techniques developed by French teachers. Includes tests of oral expression and listening comprehension, most of which double nicely as classroom activities. Text in English with examples in French.

Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Discusses a communicative view of language and defines what communicative ability is. Focusses on methodology and the role of the teacher in helping students to increase their aural-oral skills. Includes examples of teaching techniques and materials.

Omaggio, A. C. (1984). The Proficiency-Oriented Classroom. In T. V. Higgs (Ed.), *Teaching for Proficiency, the Organizing Principle* (pp. 43-84). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

Gives examples of classroom activities and relates them to proficiency goals. Presents five hypotheses concerning the development of proficiency in the foreign language classroom.

Savignon, S. J. (1983). *Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

Synthesizes a decade of work on the topic. Presents theoretical and practical considerations.

Stoller, P. H., Lock, J. T., Wilson, V., & Wattenmaker, B. (1974). *Real Communication in French*. Saratoga Springs, NY: National Humanistic Education Center.

Gives specific instructions for affectively-oriented oral communication exercises to be carried out in groups.

Wilson, V., & Wattenmaker, B. (1973). *Real Communication in Spanish*. Upper Jay, NY: Adirondack Mountain Humanistic Education Center.

Same as above, but in Spanish.

Reading

Question

Teaching students to read in the foreign language constantly causes me problems, since the textbook I use doesn't have many reading activities. How do I integrate supplementary readings into a first- or second-year course? When I *do* bring in materials, students often don't take them seriously. And even when students are receptive, so much additional vocabulary and explanation is needed in order for them to understand the selections that they are discouraged instead of stimulated. In instances where I select material written at their level, the students are insulted by the content itself. Should I just give up on teaching them to read, or is there some other solution?

Discussion

With the advent of the audio-lingual concept of language teaching in the 1950's, emphasis on the development of reading skills declined. The materials — oriented towards the spoken language — were most often in dialogue format and were contrived in order to exploit a particular structure or to incorporate certain vocabulary. Now, three decades later, although goals and methods have evolved, textbooks still reflect the format used in the stimulus-response approach to learning.

Fortunately, the profession is again accepting the premise that communication can take place through the written language as well as orally, and more and more texts are including narrative and descriptive passages for reading practice. Your question, however, concerns how to handle the problem when the textbook is not designed to teach students to read.

First, let's accept the fact that the goal of learning to read in a second language is both important *and* attainable. Second, let's distinguish between being able to *read and comprehend what is read* and being able to *analyze* the passage for isolated words, grammar points, and the like. While the latter may be important to the student in an advanced-level grammar, stylistics, or literature class, it is inappropriate for beginning and intermediate students. Third, let's differentiate between activities which call upon students to *understand* the language while listening or reading (the so-called "receptive skills") and those activities that call upon them to *generate* the language, either orally or in writing (the "productive skills"). The distinction is important because sometimes we attempt to find out how well the students can understand the language by measuring how well they are producing it! For example, we have students read a selection and answer questions in Spanish. If the student does not answer correctly, we *presume* he or she did not understand, when in fact the problem may have been in formulating the response. Hence the awareness that receptive and productive skills are two different aspects of language use is extremely important. And finally, we must be aware of the fact that a reading *assignment* is not necessarily reading *instruction*. The former implies identification of material — chapter, page, paragraph, and the like — while the latter suggests guidance before, during, and after the reading of the passage. With these four principles in mind, then, let's see how one can supplement the textbook and teach students to read.

In the section on attrition at the beginning of this volume, the point is made that most students who come into the foreign language classroom want to learn how to speak the language. And while the student is actually in the classroom, the teacher is there to model the language, encourage the student, and assist with problem areas. But when the student leaves the classroom each day, the most readily available resource until the next class period is the textbook. For this reason, the student must — first and foremost — be able to read the textbook itself. In most instances, the textbook has explanations in English, with examples in the target language. And reading, in this context, means to sound out and assign meaning to isolated words, phrases, sentences, and occasionally dialogues or paragraphs. So the first task in teaching reading is to help the student learn to derive meaning from the basic text, where the target language is incidental to and illustrative of points explained in English. But although necessary, this activity does not satisfy the definition that most of us have of "reading." We must go beyond this stage.

The first step in integrating supplementary readings into already sequenced materials is to set reading goals for the course in the form of reasonable expectations of student performance. If one uses ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines as a basis, the behaviors may reflect some of the following characteristics:

—The student completing the beginning class is able to interpret written Spanish that is highly contextualized or that contains numerous cognates. Short, informative signs, signs with graphic explanation, street and building names, menus, short instructional or directional messages, and the like can be read. Material is read for essential information, with little attention to detail. In addition, the student can read material that has been mastered previously in its oral form.

—The student completing the intermediate course is able to demonstrate an understanding of simple connected material, both authentic and specially prepared, that deals with basic survival or social needs. In addition, the intermediate student can comprehend recombinations of material already learned, and should be able to understand the main ideas in material where the structures and syntax parallel the student's native language. Telephone messages, short personal notes about familiar topics, written greetings, and social amenities common to personal letters are comprehensible to the student at this stage. In addition, the learner can be expected to understand short, simple narratives that use high-frequency vocabulary and learned grammatical patterns.

—At the more advanced intermediate level, the student can be expected to comprehend simple written materials that convey information like who, why, what, when, and where. In addition, the student can identify and extract product information from illustrated advertising, as well as the general content of headlines in newspapers and magazines and captions for photographs related to familiar or high-interest items. At this level, the student will also be able to demonstrate some ability to "guess" the meaning of new vocabulary, based on context, word order, and word-formation clues.

—At the next level, the student can be expected to identify main ideas in short paragraphs. Some uncomplicated prose and poetry, both edited and unedited, as well as material on culture and civilization designed for the reader's linguistic level, can be read for pleasure. The learner begins to demonstrate an understanding of time indicators and can interpret some elements like objective pronouns and clause connectors. Some ability to relate sentences in the discourse to advanced meanings is present, but the reader cannot sustain understanding of longer texts on unfamiliar topics.

—At the more advanced levels, it is reasonable to expect the student to be able to read simple, authentic printed material or edited textual material within a familiar context and comprehend what is read. In general, the student can follow the main ideas of a written discussion related to areas of his or her interest. The learner is able to read the facts, but is not adept at drawing inferences.

—The most proficient students are able to comprehend most factual information in nontechnical prose and discussions on concrete topics. They are able to read for information and description, to follow sequences of events, and react personally to the information gleaned from the text. The main characteristic that distinguishes this student from the educated native speaker is that the student is unable to detect subjective attitudes, values, or judgments of the author included in the writing. Similarly, the learner, although quite advanced, will probably be unable to appreciate nuance or stylistics associated with the written text.

Once the goals for reading are established, materials selection is easier. The teacher can begin to collect or produce a wide variety of signs, menus, schedules and timetables, advertisements, and the like. Newspapers and magazines in the target language are ready resources, and teachers can collect realia from consumer products as they travel abroad. By starting collections in file folders on various subjects, the teacher can soon build a considerable reserve of culturally authentic reading materials. Many teachers also have students correspond with pen pals in other countries. When the students write in English and receive letters in the second language, they generally maintain more interest in the exchange, since they are better able to express themselves in the native language. And the ensuing practice is in the receptive skill of reading.

As more lengthy prose is used, the teacher should look for selections that are of high interest to the students and of moderate difficulty linguistically. With respect to difficulty, sentence length and number of sentences are two important factors. Material with a larger number of shorter sentences tends to be easier than material containing fewer, but longer sentences.

It was pointed out earlier that reading instruction is distinguished by the presence of some guidance given the student prior to, during, and following the actual reading of the selection. There are numerous ways that this guidance can be developed; the suggested readings following this discussion contain several approaches.

One effective method for beginning a selection of several pages is to have the students look at the title and discuss what the story *might* be about. They can then scan the passage for proper nouns or other clues to content. If there are questions following the reading, the teacher might ask the class to guess what the story is about by looking at the questions. Although the students will be unable to answer the questions before they read the selection, key vocabulary and some insight into content can come from discussing the questions in advance.

In order to help students during the reading phase, the teacher can ask students to look for certain information (i.e., answers to specific questions) as they read. This gives the students a purpose for the assignment, as well as a tangible product as a result of the reading. Answers may be in the native language or in the target language depending on the abilities and levels of the students. In any case, it is important to remember that most reading at the beginning and intermediate levels should be done for general ideas rather than for attention to too much detail. In other words, the early goal is for *extensive* reading, with later attention given to *intensive* reading. And the students who can get general information from the act of reading will be more inclined to read than will the students who become mired in the seemingly insignificant tedium of text analysis. In most cases, our effort should be to confront the students with the same types of reading tasks that they would have to perform were they to visit an area where the language is the medium of communication.

Following the assigned reading, the students should be given an opportunity to demonstrate their comprehension by answering questions related to the material. They should also be encouraged to ask for clarification of unclear passages and expressions. The teacher may also use this time to focus attention on *a few* new vocabulary words, or perhaps talk a bit about the usefulness of context, affixes, and morphology in guessing the meaning of unknown words. Care should be taken, however, that the follow-up activities become neither a translation nor a vocabulary lesson, but maintain a focus on reading for general information.

Summary

For the teacher who finds that the textbook does not provide adequate reading materials, an effort should be made to collect culturally authentic examples of the written language that are appropriate for classroom use. Product labels, menus, signs, brochures and pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, catalogs, and numerous other types of texts can be collected and organized thematically. In addition, teachers should check publishers' catalogs and displays at professional meetings, and request examination copies of appropriate materials.

Although reading is a receptive skill, it is certainly *not* a passive skill. On the contrary, the student who develops functional proficiency in reading in a second language may well retain that skill longer than any other that is taken from the language classroom. Toward that end, it is well to consider reading instruction as a critical component in any program designed to teach a second language.

Suggested Reading

Harris, A. J., & Sipay, E. R. (1975). *How to Increase Reading Ability* (6th ed.). New York: David McKay Company.

This comprehensive volume is versatile enough to serve as a textbook at the undergraduate and graduate levels, a desk reference for reading teachers, and a resource for educators dealing with learning disabilities. Reading ability and disability, readiness and beginning instruction, meeting individual reading needs, and methods of assessing reading performance are but a few of the topics discussed in great detail.

Hosenfeld, C., Arnold, V., Kirchofer, J., Laciura, J., & Wilson, L. (1981). Second Language Reading: A Curricular Sequence for Teaching Reading Strategies. *Foreign Language Annals, 14*, 415-22.

This article describes a seven-step sequence of activities that can be used to help students develop reading strategies. The authors offer specific recommendations for teaching the sequence, and include additional options that might be explored. Although examples are drawn from French, the article is easily understood by one who is not conversant in the language.

King, J. K., Holley, F. M., & Weber, B. N. (1975). A New Reading. In G. A. Jarvis (Ed.), *Perspective: A New Freedom* (pp. 169-217). The ACTFL Review of Foreign Language Education, 7. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

This chapter offers an extensive review of pre-1975 literature on second-language reading instruction, and identifies key features that should be incorporated in developing the skill, regardless of the methodology employed.

Mackay, R., Barkman, B., & Jordon, R. R. (Eds.) (1979). *Reading in a Second Language: Hypotheses, Organization, and Practice.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

This volume contains a number of excellent articles about organizing and implementing reading instruction. Although oriented toward the teaching of English as a second language, the collection explores current thinking and practice that are equally applicable to other languages.

Medley, F. W., Jr. (1977). Reading Assignments Versus Reading Instruction: Native Language Strategies and Techniques for Use in the Foreign Language Classroom. In R. A. Schulz (Ed.), *Personalizing Foreign Language Instruction* (pp. 29-42). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

This article offers a number of specific strategies and techniques that can be used to prepare students for a reading assignment, to guide the reading, to develop skill in comprehension, and to test reading ability. The notes at the end of the selection enable the reader to pursue a variety of reading-related topics in greater detail.

Schulz, R. A. (1983). From Word to Meaning: Foreign Language Reading Instruction after the Elementary Course. *The Modern Language Journal*, 67, 127-34.

In this article, the author gives a brief theoretical background of reading, and then discusses text selection, pre-reading instruction, and strategies for contextual guessing. In addition, a good, selective bibliography can be drawn from the notes.

Smith, F. (1971). *Understanding Reading*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

This publication offers one of the most thorough discussions ever written of the reading process as it relates to native language. The book lays the foundation for an understanding of the many strategies that can be used to develop reading ability, both in the native and second languages.

Smith, W. F. (1981). *Noticiario*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

This series of workbooks for three levels of Spanish has been designed expressly to supplement existing textbooks. The objective is to teach students to read new, authentic material on sight, and without recourse to a bilingual dictionary. Developed through extensive classroom and language laboratory research, the series is now being expanded to include French and German, with three-volume sets becoming available in each language.

Culture

Question

I'm a firm believer that language and culture are inseparable. In fact my whole approach to teaching is based on the assumption that studying a foreign language will help students develop positive attitudes toward members of the foreign culture. But to be blunt, I am getting discouraged. When I try to bring interesting points of culture into my classes, students often respond in a negative way. Anything *different* in the foreign culture evokes a chorus of derisive comments, represented most frequently by "That's gross!" or "They're weird!" Why are my students so prejudiced? What are some specific things I can do to help them become more open-minded? Am I correct in thinking that studying a foreign language helps students develop positive attitudes toward the target culture? Should I be stressing cultural differences or cultural similarities? How much help can I expect from my textbook? And finally, what is the best way to teach for cross-cultural understanding?

Discussion

Your frustration, shared by many, is understandable in light of the fact that we frequently use "reduced ethnocentrism" as a selling point for the study of foreign languages. Part of the problem lies in the psychological nature of the adolescent student. Research shows that with the onset of puberty, the horizons of the 12-to-16-year-old narrow down to the boundaries of the peer group. Gaining the approval of friends becomes the dominant need in an adolescent's life. Consequently, the peer group's way of saying and doing things is the *right* way; any other way is wrong and fair game for ridicule. When a student groans and pretends to gag upon hearing that some French enjoy eating horse meat, his performance says to his classmates, "See, I reject *their* way; I'm with *you*!" By disparaging the outsiders' actions, he separates himself from what is different and confirms his membership in the peer group.

Interestingly, there is strong research evidence to show that younger children — those from around seven to twelve years of age — are more open to other people and other ways than are adolescents. The middle childhood period is characterized by relatively fluid attitudes and by a tendency to be accepting of things that are different. For example, research has shown that American children of around ten years of age are especially open to information about foreign people. They are generally positive in their reaction to those whom they perceive as *dissimilar* to themselves as well as to those whom they view as similar.

Allport's three-stage theory of prejudice accords well with this finding. Children in the first stage are interested in group differences and do not have negative feelings against members of other groups. Children in the second stage, which reaches its peak in early puberty, are characterized by total rejection of everybody and everything that is different. In the third stage, reached in late adolescence, young people give evidence of becoming more tolerant toward others and seem less prone to assume a prejudiced stance toward out-group members.

Research-based information of this type provides strong support for urging that foreign language study begin at least as early as middle school. To offer foreign language study for the first time to ninth and tenth graders, as is the case in most American school systems, is to offer foreign languages to students at the least receptive period of their lives and wastes the opportunity to reach students at the time when they are most open to other cultures. The fact that we introduce foreign language study at a time when students have already formulated strong in-group/out-group attitudes accounts in part for the impression teachers receive that their students are not developing the positive attitudes the curriculum guide predicts.

Unfortunately, even starting language study early is no guarantee of automatic empathy. Although research does indicate that a positive attitude toward the target culture facilitiates the acquisition of language, research has *not* demonstrated that studying a foreign language results in the development of positive attitudes. In other words, a good attitude toward the culture helps students learn language, but learning language does not guarantee a good attitude toward the culture.

The implication for those of us who teach is that we must give our students as dimensional an understanding of culture as possible and hope that their knowledge of the variety within the target culture will lead to an appreciation of cultural similarities and an acceptance of cultural differences.

It is the area of cultural differences (real or perceived) which generates most of the stereotypes our students hold. A teacher dealing with foreign language and culture must have a clear understanding of the nature of prejudice and stereotyping. Prejudice is a feeling for or against something or someone. It is frequently articulated in the form of a stereotype — a kind of generalization which ascribes certain characteristics to all members of a group without considering the existing range of differences. An example of prejudice and an accompanying stereotype would be: "I have no respect for Americans (feeling against); they segregate their elderly in 'old folks' homes' and then go off and forget them" (ascription of a characteristic to all members of a group).

Although in most discussions of cross-cultural understanding the term stereotype has taken on strongly negative connotations, stereotypes are in fact essential to thinking, and we all use them constantly. It is impossible to reflect analytically on each of the thousands of isolated encounters we experience each day as we interact with our environment. In the process of organizing thought, the human brain tends to clump these bits of information together into manageable segments and then react to those segments. The critic of "stereotyping" — who would understandably protest such a statement as "Male hairdressers are gay" — will make casual reference to "the Republicans" or "teachers" or "football fans" and be not the least disturbed that he or she is in fact stereotyping — assigning people to categories that fail to consider individual differences.

The fact that we all use stereotypes does not mean that they are necessarily harmless; indeed, they have the power to be destructive.

Students should be made aware of what stereotypes are and how they are used and be given a chance to practice analyzing stereotypes for the prejudice they reflect.

Brislin at the East-West Center in Honolulu has described the forms that prejudice takes in a way that students can readily grasp. His categories include the following:

(1) *Redneck racism.* An extreme form of prejudice found all over the world in which some people believe that members of a certain cultural group are inherently inferior and thus do not merit just and courteous treatment. It is important to point out that this type of prejudice does occur worldwide; sometimes our students receive the impression that only Americans are prejudiced. And it is encouraging to note that formal education plays a powerful role in reducing this kind of racism. Research shows that, as the number of years of formal education increases, the incidence of redneck racism decreases.

(2) *Symbolic racism.* This is an elusive form of prejudice and is probably more widespread than redneck racism among affluent members of the middle class in various countries. People with this prejudice have negative feelings about members of another group because they feel that the group is disturbing the status quo. A typical expression of this view would be a statement such as, "Freshmen/Women/Native Americans are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights." Those who exhibit symbolic racism do not dislike members of the group *per se*, and they do not hold the violent views characteristic of redneck racism. In fact, they would stoutly deny that they are prejudiced, a situation which makes it difficult to help them overcome the problem.

(3) *Tokenism.* People in this group are also unaware of their own negative feelings toward others — at least at a conscious level. Often they engage in some token activity to demonstrate goodwill toward members of an out-group. This "proves" (to themselves and to observers) that they are open-minded. It also excuses them from becoming engaged in more self-involving ways in the fight against prejudice. (If you mail a contribution to the United Negro College Fund, you don't need to appear in person at a school board hearing to advocate the observance of Black Awareness Week.)

(4) *Arms-length prejudice.* People with this kind of prejudice dis-

play positive reactions toward members of another group while in formal or semiformal situations (conducting business, dining at a banquet, serving on a committee); but they hold themselves aloof in more intimate situations (relating as neighbors, dining in someone's home, dating). Because these people give every appearance of cordiality at the surface level, arms-length prejudice is often difficult to spot.

(5) *Real likes and dislikes.* Sometimes members of a given group engage in behaviors (littering, smoking, noise-making) that engender negative feelings in others. Most discussions of prejudice fail to recognize this common form of hostility; yet individuals are entitled to genuine likes and dislikes and should not be made to feel that every negative view represents a hidden character flaw.

(6) *The familiar and unfamiliar.* Research has shown that people are drawn to those who share the same behavior patterns, the same values, the same world view. On the other hand, they are less comfortable interacting with those whose attitudes and actions are unlike their own. Thus people's natural preference for what is comfortable and non-stressful may result in behavior which others might label "avoidance" or "discrimination." Students should be aware of this kind of mild prejudice based on what is familiar and unfamiliar.

Knowing about these different forms that prejudice takes gives students a way to discuss negative feelings more intelligently and increases their ability to analyze with sensitivity their own attitudes toward members of other groups. While it may not be feasible to include a study of prejudice and stereotyping as part of every foreign language course, teachers with strong intercultural goals should plan ways to help their students acquire these understandings.

That negative attitudes do exist in those who elect to study foreign languages has been amply demonstrated. Matched guise studies found, for instance, that American students taking French had a generally negative view of French-speaking bilinguals whose voices they heard on tape — perceiving them as less intelligent, less thoughtful, less stable, less dependable, and less honest than they perceived the same person when he or she was heard speaking English.

Other studies show that college students come to their foreign language classes already bearing an invisible backpack of stereotypes. The cultural materials offered by textbooks do little to dispel stereotypical thinking. For instance, Lusky has pointed out that Spanish texts make repeated reference to "Hispanic culture," to "*el mundo hispanico*," and to "*la sociedad hispanica*" — as if all Spanish cultures were one and the same. This tendency to lump together all things Hispanic leads inevitably to statements such as this from a student essay: "The only Spaniards I've ever met are Cuban."

One of the most effective weapons against stereotyping is to help students become aware of the dimensionality of any given culture. It is relatively easy for Americans to recognize the many-faceted nature of their own culture: the enormous variety in geography and climate, for instance, and the richly diverse human textures based on ethnic and racial origin. A discussion of stereotypes held by members of the target culture about the United States is time well spent. Once students come face to face with the impossibility of encapsulating America in a nutshell, they are less prone to formulate sweeping generalizations about other cultures. And once they experience the frustration of knowing that outsiders hold questionably valid stereotypes about American culture, students are more willing to investigate the validity of stereotypes they hold about others.

Recent studies have caused some scholars to advocate the teaching of cultural similarities instead of cultural differences during the initial stages of language learning. Emphasizing the ways in which the lifestyles of speakers of the target language coincide with our own seems to enable students to identify in a positive way with members of the foreign culture. In other words, perceived similarity contributes toward the establishment of positive first impressions — impressions which, once formed, are not easily changed.

As an example of a technique designed expressly to focus the attention of beginning language students on cultural similarities, Hahn suggests displaying pictures and ads from foreign magazines which depict products that resemble ours and show people in familiar settings doing things compatible with our own lifestyles. Students are then asked to examine the pictures and point out the commonalities. To carry the idea further, students may choose a theme (such as the family) or a cultural value (perhaps physical fitness) from a list of examples and look for illustrations which portray it. Student-made collages depicting the concepts are later used for individual or small group oral and written activities.

While it is important to stress cultural similarities at the beginning of language study to give students the impression that the foreign culture is "just like ours" would be a serious misrepresentation of reality. If the foreign culture were just like ours, students would not be devoting their time to learning its unique communication system; and differences in behavior and belief would not hold the power to thwart intercultural understanding as they do. Indeed, a prime responsibility of the teacher is to help students become aware of differences — and to feel at ease with them.

Unfortunately, foreign language textbooks offer little help in developing the specific skills requisite to multicultural sensitivity. These would include:

(1) *Analytical skills:* being able to recognize cultural themes and values as they are reflected in social customs and portrayed in the arts, literature, popular culture, and folklore of the target culture.

(2) *Observational skills:* being able to "read" the visual cues — the signs, symbols, and nonverbal behavior of the foreign culture — in the same way that members of the culture read them.

(3) *Cross-cultural skills:* being able to compare the ways different cultures have evolved in response to their unique position in the world community without assigning evaluative labels such as "good," "bad," "wrong," or "right."

The skills just described can be partially attained within the limited time our educational system allocates for language study only if textbooks provide specific guidance and offer activities focussed on intercultural skill development.

Textbooks are also weak in showing direct connections between language and culture. Not only is the *meaning* of a word culturally determined, but also the *frequency* of its use and the *situational context* in which it is appropriate. Textbooks usually settle for presenting the surface meaning and ignore other subtle, but culturally crucial, dimensions. While paralinguistic features of intonation, pitch, and stress are routinely included by textbook authors, they are seldom discussed in the context of their impact on culture; and the cultural implications of such features as rapidity of speech and degree of volume are predictably ignored. It is a grave mistake to omit imparting these language/cultural insights to students. From a motivational standpoint alone they are heady stuff. Reserving them for advanced graduate courses means that this significant dimension of culture reaches only a minuscule portion of language learners.

Unfortunately, classroom teachers do not have the time to ferret out these kinds of cultural information. Their only recourse is to ask textbook companies to insist that publishers demand that authors include such materials in their textbooks — certainly a cumbersome "chain of demand" and one that takes years to produce results.

Supplying the student with cultural information to process at the cognitive level is not enough. Evidence is mounting that the best way to teach culture is to present both cognitive and affective aspects via a multisensory approach — involving students in audio, visual, verbal, and behavioral experiences. The use of films and of video cassettes to make students aware of the contextual dimensions of language is one example. Video furnishes models of eye contact, facial expression, posture, gesture, interaction distances, and movement styles. Even beginning students should be given consistent exposure to these visual elements. Research indicates that unless students are sensitized to these aspects of communication from the very start of their language training, they may become so attuned to the verbal component that they never acquire the ability to attend to visual signals.

Professional journals include a wealth of articles presenting specific techniques for using not only films and videotapes but also magazine ads, newspapers, cartoons, slides, photographs, student-made movies, and realia to bring the visual aspects of culture into the classroom.

The behavioral aspect of language and culture learning may involve role-playing and other dramatic experiences. Although in these cases the cultural situation is simulated instead of real, students are actively engaged and can become deeply involved at the affective level. Of course, face-to-face contacts with native speakers in interview, conversational, and dramatic situations are even more powerful. Students attest to the linguistic and cultural value of these authentic experiences and subsequently report a strong surge of interest in speakers of the target language, whom they have come to perceive, often for the first time, as multi-faceted human beings instead of print-and-paper stereotypes.

Summary

Psychologically, students in the middle school are most receptive to new cultures and different lifestyles. At puberty students become conscious of pressures to conform to their own group and develop resistance to things that are different. For optimal learning of language and culture it is best to begin foreign language studies by the age of ten or earlier.

At every age students are involved in the process of forming stereotypes. They need help in understanding the connection between stereotyping and prejudice, and in analyzing their own feelings toward members of other groups. By becoming sensitive to the dimensionality of their own culture, they can learn to expect and accept differences in other cultures.

It is important, however, to focus on cultural similarities instead of cultural differences in the beginning stages of language learning since perceived similarities help form positive impressions. Nevertheless, students must become aware of those differences which threaten cultural harmony and learn to understand them. By engaging in experience-based activities designed to teach analytical, observational, and cross-cultural skills, students can develop multicultural sensitivity.

The best way to teach culture is to present both cognitive and affective dimensions, using as many sensory channels as possible, and following a plan which presents a cohesive picture of the foreign culture.

Suggested Reading

Allport, G. (1967). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA.: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Provides a solid foundation for interpreting more recent readings in the area of prejudice and stereotyping.

Brislin, R. W. (1978). Structured Approaches to Dealing with Prejudice and Intercultural Misunderstanding. *International Journal of Group Tensions*, 8.

If you are interested in Brislin's categories of prejudice, this will provide further information.

Crawford-Lange, L. M., & Lange, D. L. (1984). Doing the Unthinkable in the Second-Language Classroom: A Process for the Integration of Language and Culture. In T. Higgs (Ed.), *Teaching for Proficiency, the Organizing Principle* (pp. 139-177). The ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

A carefully structured argument for integrating the study of language and culture, with emphasis on the centrality of culture rather than on language. Offers a specific schema for executing the integration. The accompanying bibliography is detailed and varied.

Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning*. Rowley, MA.: Newbury House.

Much interesting material relative to the authors' dimensional studies in the area of stereotyping, prejudice, and motivation for studying a foreign language.

Hahn, S. L. (1980). Let's Try A Positive Approach. *Foreign Language Annals*, *13*, 415-417.

Stresses the desirability of emphasizing cultural similarities rather than cultural differences at early stages of language study.

Hendon, U. (1980). Introducing Culture in the High School Foreign Language Class. *Foreign Language Annals*, *13*, 191-199.

A concise overview of the techniques and strategies for including culture as an integral part of the language course.

Kramsch, C. J. (1983). Culture and Constructs: Communicating Attitudes and Values in the Foreign Language Classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, *16*, 437-448.

An approach to developing intercultural understanding based on Kelly's psychology of personal constructs. Examples clarify the method.

Lambert, W. E., & Klineberg, O. (1967). *Children's Views of Foreign People: A Cross-Cultural Study*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Detailed report of an extensive study to determine attitudes of children around the world toward members of foreign cultures.

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Lusky, M. H. (1981). Some Doubts About the Cultural Approach to Teaching Spanish. *Hispania, 64*, 266-272.

A cautionary look at the problems which can develop in attempting to teach culture in the foreign language class, with an emphasis on stereotyping and prejudice.

Morain, G. (1983). Commitment to the Teaching of Foreign Cultures. *The Modern Language Journal*, 67, 403-412.

Discusses models for analyzing culture, approaches to establishing cultural goals, and the role of culture in the curriculum.

Murdock, G. P., et al. (1971). *Outline of Cultural Materials*. New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, Inc.

One of the most dimensional sources for information on the cultures of both common and uncommonly taught languages. Bibliography provides resources for areas of specific interest.

Newmark, E., & Asante, M. K. (1976). *Intercultural Communication*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Urbana, IL, and Speech Communication Association, Falls Church, VA.

The authors list specific skills which they feel can be taught and which can serve to develop multicultural awareness and sensitivity in children. They suggest a group of experience-based activities designed to focus first on self-discovery and to move on through an exploration of mind sets and frames of reference both different from and similar to our own.

Robinson, G. L. N. (1981). *Issues in Second Language and Cross-Cultural Education: The Forest Through the Trees*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Important information relative to the concept of "hollow language" (devoid of cultural message); the need to focus on cultural similarities instead of differences; and the role of personal involvement in cultural identification and language acquisition.

Seelye, H. N. (1984). *Teaching Culture: Strategies for Intercultural Communication*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

If your culture-teaching library had to be reduced to one volume, this would probably be the most helpful. Includes theory, research, examples of teaching strategies, and a voluminous bibliography.

Y AVAILABLE

Tuttle, H. G., Guitart, J., Papalia, A., & Zampogna, J. (1979). Effects of Cultural Presentations on Attitudes of Foreign Language Students. *The Modern Language Journal*, 63, 177-182.

An excellent example of a classroom-based study designed to test, among other things, whether it is preferable to teach cultural similarities or cultural differences to beginning language students. In this study, the language is Spanish, the students are seventh and eighth graders, and the culture is Puerto Rican.

Literature

Question

Because of the current interest in communicative competence and the attendant emphasis on teaching oral skills, some of my colleagues feel that the study of literature should be left for the advanced levels of language instruction. Is there any research to show when and how literature should be introduced? What genres are most effectively taught? Is literature a good approach to cross-cultural understanding? Does research have anything to say about strategies for teaching literature?

Discussion

Either literary specialists have not been attracted to research, or research specialists have not been attracted to literature. Whichever it is, there are few research studies to indicate direction for the foreign language teacher. The ideas and emotions of authors, it seems, evoke responses in the reader which are too elusive to be confined to levels of statistical significance. In spite of the paucity of "hard core" research in the area, however, there does exist a group of professional writings devoted to an exploration of the best ways to teach literature. Teachers looking for concrete help can find it. What they cannot find, in response to their questions on literary pedagogy, are answers discovered under the microscope or distilled in a test tube.

The traditional view which equates "literature" with *belles-lettres* is beginning to change. Those who still adhere to the notion insist that it is impossible to begin the study of literature until the student has attained a high degree of linguistic skill. They hold that whatever contact the student has with the printed page prior to this stage is mere "reading" rather than the study of literature. Proponents of this position pay little attention to *what* one reads while in the learning stage, dismissing it as pedagogically contrived but hopefully innocuous; surely, they insist, it is not *literature*.

Many teachers, however, feel that even beginning language students have the right to savor the joys of literature. The problem lies in overcoming their linguistic inadequacies. Students with sketchy knowledge of grammar and only a rudimentary vocabulary find little delight in deciphering the printed page.

There are two essential considerations in choosing literary selections. The first involves the fit between the language in the literary text and the student's linguistic skills. Scholars differ on the desirability of editing a literary passage to reduce the number of linguistic problems. Some insist that it is virtual heresy to "water down" the original work. Others feel that it is better for students to read a masterpiece in an abridged form than not to experience it at all. No studies have been done to "prove" the superiority of either approach. But the fact remains that *whatever* students are expected to read, unless the content is accessible to them through their understanding of grammar and vocabulary, they will not reach the level of personal involvement with the text necessary for true appreciation.

A second consideration in selecting literary materials involves the student's interest in the content of the reading. While our colleagues in English education have produced a wealth of materials dealing with readers' response to literature and with selections based on the concept of "high interest/easy reading," similar studies in foreign language circles are rare. One study did explore the preferences of students of French for types of reading content and discovered that students' academic majors affected their preferences. Students majoring in social sciences and the humanities preferred readings based on French civilization, culture, history, and biography. Those students majoring in math and the natural sciences named "popular adventure fiction" as their top choice.

Indicators point toward the need to examine with a fresh eye the literary selections traditionally offered to students. To date, no study has demonstrated that advanced high school students of French will de-materialize if they do not read *Le Petit Prince*. (French teenagers themselves do not read *Le Petit Prince*!) Traditional offerings in Spanish and German are just as frayed at the literary seams.

Although these jaded favorites have literary merit, they may be less than spellbinding to today's students. Certainly, teachers would welcome the chance to work creatively with fresh materials. Good writing exists in science fiction, in history, in fantasy, in humor, in genres of mystery and detection; and rich sources of literature are available from non-European Franco, Hispanic, and Portuguese cultures. Teachers are advised to strike out into new realms and discover writing that their students can enjoy.

In fact, to assume that literature is necessarily *written* is to ignore the enormously varied body of oral literature which co-exists with the written and which not only predates it by centuries, but in fact has provided the world's greatest literary figures with their themes and motifs. Certain genres of oral literature are ideal for use in the early and intermediate stages of language learning. Folktales, legends, proverbial sayings, droll anecdotes, tales of the supernatural, poetry, rhymes, and folk songs have much to offer. For the most part, the language of oral lore has been stripped to the essentials by generations of telling; the obscure descriptions, confusing flashbacks, and flowery phraseology of many literary works are absent from folk literature. Furthermore, the pacing of folk narrative is rapid; plot structure is simple; action is everything. This barebones narrative style makes for excellent listening comprehension, particularly since redundancy is included in the form of stock phrases, incremental repetition, and patterned actions. The interest factor is seldom a problem in oral literature. Legends and yarns do not survive for centuries unless they have intrinsic appeal to both the tellers of tales and their listeners.

Whether the selection is drawn from contemporary or traditional sources, its content must be sufficiently mature to intrigue sophisticated readers, even though the linguistic level is geared to the beginning or intermediate student. Finding such selections is a prime challenge to teachers of foreign language literature. It should also be a paramount concern of the publishers of textbooks, readers, and literary anthologies.

Even the most carefully selected text must be presented with a variety of techniques to bring it alive. Fortunately, the professional journals describe strategies for arousing student interest, teaching vocabulary, creating communicative activities based on the literary work, and helping students not only to cope with unfamiliar verb tenses, but to analyze elements of character and narrative as well. It *is* possible to surmount the difficulties which cause frustration and turn students away from literature. With proper preparation, even beginning and intermediate students can approach a poem or a piece of fiction without apprehension, can relish the experience, and emerge with a feeling of aesthetic satisfaction.

The rationale for involving students in literary experiences at all levels of language learning is based in part on recent brain research dealing with left hemisphere/right hemisphere modes of processing information. Left hemisphere processing is analytical, linear, and sequential — the approach essential to dealing with words, their morphological components, and their syntactic arrangements. In short, left hemisphere processing is critical to language learning as we have traditionally structured it in the classroom. On the other hand, the right hemisphere processes information via images and spatial relationships. It seeks patterns, combines parts into wholes, and makes connecting links. This is the type of learning experience which we have failed to provide in the foreign language classroom with any degree of regularity. It is precisely the type of experience which activities stemming from the study of literature can provide.

There is some evidence that while left hemisphere vocabulary is precise and denotative, right hemisphere vocabulary is less objective, more given to imagery and to evoking subjective responses. The use of metaphor is also a right brain function — connections made and patterns recognized in the right hemisphere are transmitted, through some kind of imagery, to the left hemisphere. Literary studies, with their attention to imagery, metaphor, and word play, and with their emphasis on exploring emotional response, call the right hemisphere into action. When teachers incorporate images, paintings, three dimensional forms, movement and sound into literary presentations, they provide an opportunity for the right hemisphere to discern patterns and whole gestalts. And by involving students in direct literary experiences such as dramatic enactments, teachers enable the students to engage in holistic learning situations that stimulate right hemisphere thinking. Literature approached in this way offers an alternative to the traditional verbal and analytical left brain method and gives students a chance to use their full range of intellectual abilities.

This dimensional involvement is compatible in many ways with the "personalized approach" to literature recently proposed for beginning and intermediate students. Students at that stage of linguistic and literary sophistication — who are incapable of or uninterested in an analytical *explication de texte* — may be drawn into an involvement with the literary text through activities which appeal to their imagination and evoke responses based on their personal experiences, their attitudes, and their values. Muyskens conducted a study at the intermediate college level to determine the effects of a personalized approach to literature on student achievement and on student attitudes toward the study of foreign language and literature. The teaching method itself was shown to have no significant effect, but the *teacher* did have a significant effect both on achievement and on attitudes toward language study. The researcher concluded that because of the importance of their role, teachers of foreign language literature must receive training in the skills of teaching literature.

The whole area of attitudes as they relate to the study of literature has been a difficult one for researchers. Attitudes, it seems, are by their very nature capricious and unstable. Efforts to pin them down and then change them via exposure to cultural or literary treatments have proved singularly ineffective. While there are excellent articles urging a literary approach to the teaching of cross-cultural understanding, empirical evidence that such an approach actually changes attitudes is lacking. For example, a well-structured attempt to determine the effects of the study of Francophone African literature upon students' knowledge of French and their attitudes toward Africans revealed that in this study a knowledge of the culture embedded in the literary works of African writers did not result in positive attitudinal changes toward Africans.

One experienced teacher of English as a foreign language concluded that the study of American literature actually seemed to increase misunderstanding and confusion on the part of his Arab students. They read Hemingway's *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place,* which portrays the loneliness of a drunken old man, clinging to the warmth and brightness of a café and dreading the closing hour that would force him out into the night. This whole idea was baffling to the students from a Middle Eastern culture where an old man is always surrounded by his extended family and where even the aged whose mental capacities have failed are revered because they are thought to be in touch with the holy dead. The students' negative preconceptions about Americans were reinforced by the situation depicted and by the attitudes of the characters involved — not only in the example cited but in other literary selections by American authors which the class read. Unless students are given enough information to set literary selections in a valid cultural matrix, they are quite likely to interpret the literature in light of their own system of values and cultural assumptions. The situation is particularly dangerous from an intercultural standpoint because teachers of literature tend to assume that their students have received a positive impact from their study of literature.

Summary

If literature is to be enjoyed by foreign language students at all stages of language study, literary selections must be chosen with an eye to appropriate levels of language difficulty and to the readers' degree of interest in the contents. An expanded view of "acceptable" genres and subject matters would permit the inclusion of oral (folk) literature as well as of more wide-ranging contemporary materials. Techniques for teaching literature which offer a multi-sensory approach can involve the student in holistic right hemisphere learning in addition to the analytically-oriented left hemisphere learning which dominates most foreign language classrooms. Finally, although scholars feel strongly that the use of literature can be an effective approach to the teaching of positive cultural attitudes, empirical evidence to support this has yet to be advanced. Teachers must make an informed effort to include cultural orientation as part of the study of literary selections.

Suggested Reading

Bostick, H. F. (1972). Teaching Afro-French Literature in the American Secondary School: A New Dimension. *Foreign Language Annals*, 5, 420-431.

Good, concrete suggestions for teaching poetry, short stories, and folktales with a discussion of ways to integrate Afro-French literature and culture into the high school curriculum.

Dathorne, O. R. (1974). Literary Studies in a Broader Context. In G. A. Jarvis (Ed.), *Responding to New Realities* (pp. 189-217). The ACTFL Review of Foreign Language Education, 5. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co.

A good source for suggestions of non-traditional literature which can be used effectively in the foreign language classroom. The works of literature discussed are written in Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English.

Hooper, A. C. (1975). *Reading Interest in French of College Students*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Conference on Language Teaching. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 139 250)

An account of a 1975 investigation of college students' preferences for reading content in French.

LaBonte, R. (1980). Méthodes d'initiation à la poésie pour jeunes adultes. *The French Review, 53*, 685-695.

Written in French, this is an excellent source of ideas for incorporating creative methodology into the teaching of poetry.

Lohnes, W. F. W., (Ed.) (1972). The Teaching of Foreign Literatures. *The Modern Language Journal, 56*(5).

This entire issue is devoted to the theme of teaching foreign literatures, and includes articles on literary analysis at the intermediate level, teaching the Spanish novel, an experimental approach to the Spanish American theatre, teaching literature in the secondary schools, literature in translation at the introductory level, American doctoral research on the teaching of literature, and the transition from reading to the reading of literature.

McGinty, M. S. (1979). A Methodology to Introduce Intermediate College and Advanced High School Students of German to Basic Concepts of Prose Fiction (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Georgia, 1978). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 39*, 3426A.

A study designed to use German short stories to teach intermediate undergraduate students of German such fundamentals of prose structure as the concepts of unity, the end effect, characterization, motivation, foreshadowing, the camera effect, and techniques for structuring scenes and episodes. Students demonstrated their understanding through their own creative writing. Results showed that the students' study of structure did lead them to a better grasp of the content, especially of the humanistic aspect.

Muyskens, J. A. (1983). Teaching Second-Language Literatures: Past, Present, and Future. *The Modern Language Journal*, 67, 413-423.

A discussion of the problems relative to the teaching of foreign language literatures over the last fifteen years. The author reviews the goals and methodologies relevant to beginning and intermediate students, from high school to the graduate level. A good bibliography is included.

Nwako, R. N., Aubery, P., Baker, M. R., & Papalia, A. (1979). Effects of the Study of Francophone African Literature upon High School Students' Knowledge of French and Attitudes toward Africans. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 35, 194-203.

An account of one of the few experimental studies designed to explore the effects of literary study on attitudes.

Santoni, G. V. (1972). Methods of Teaching Literature. *Foreign Language Annals*, 5, 432-441.

A discussion of the need for "preliterary exercises" to prepare students for appreciation of a literary text. A detailed example of how to teach a French poem illustrates the approach.

Schulz, R. (1981). Literature and Readability: Bridging the Gap in Foreign Language Reading. *The Modern Language Journal*, 65, 43-53.

A strong plea for the necessity of considering the student's level of linguistic ability when selecting reading material.

Smith, A. N. (1976). Combining Structure Drills and Reading Comprehension Exercises to Teach Literature. *Foreign Language Annals*, 9, 525-529.

The author provides excellent examples of steps teachers can take to enable their students to avoid grammatical and lexical pitfalls that interfere with meaning.

Williams, L. V. (1983). *Teaching for the Two-Sided Mind*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

An excellent introduction to the area of left hemisphere/right hemisphere learning, with some direct applications for teachers of foreign language and literature.

Learning Environment

Multi-Level Classes

Question

I have been a foreign language teacher for fifteen years in the same school district. My principal just told me that in the fall I would be teaching a combined class of third, fourth, and fifth year students. I feel despair, confusion, and fear. What is within the realm of the possible when one is forced to accept students from different class levels in one class hour? How does a teacher like me with five teaching periods per day organize time, space, content, and skill development in a class that has two or three levels of students? Can you tell me if there are any data on the effects of combining students in a multi-level classroom?

Discussion

Any teacher faced with the reality of multi-level or combined classes, the teaching of two or more levels of foreign language in a single class period, should not feel alone — this phenomenon has proliferated over the past five years or so as enrollments and budgets have tended to shrink. While a natural response on the part of the teacher is despair, those who have researched this particular curriculum problem strongly urge that the situation be approached as positively as possible. If the teacher is apologetic or negative about having to teach two or three levels in the same class period, students, too, will view combined classes as a necessary evil, doomed to failure. This could discourage students from enrolling in a foreign language class in the future which, in turn, could defeat any future possiblity for separate classes. The attitude teachers should continually stress is cooperation.

Since 1978, articles have begun to appear in professional journals on how teachers can positively cope with combined classes. While we still await research on the effects of multi-level classes on student learning, at least we can take heart from strategies offered by those actually teaching such classes. Their message is that while conventional techniques for structuring the class hour will no longer be appropriate, combined classes offer the opportunity to experiment with different teaching strategies, equipment, materials, and group dynamics. Graded readers, supplemental grammar review workbooks, magazines, filmstrips, and slides that often remain in the library or on the classroom's back shelf can be dusted off and systematically incorporated into classroom activities to be used by all students — not only by those who "finish the work early." Any topic which may be presented only briefly in the conventional classroom because of time restraints can be studied in more depth by small groups of students or by individuals. This is particularly pertinent to cultural information. The record player, tape recorder, and overhead projector are all important teacher aids that can be set up in separate learning centers and can free the teacher to do other kinds of activities with other students. Computers find a very comfortable home in multi-level classes as students receive immediate feedback without constraining the teacher. Combined classes bring the advantage of permitting the upper level students to see what they have accomplished and inspiring the lower level ones to achieve these same skills.

How does the teacher organize the multi-level class? Most researchers discourage the strategy of treating the students as though they were at the same level since differences in ability bring problems. One exception to this is what is called the Rotating Levels Approach. Here, the teacher treats the students as a single class but alternates the curriculum content each year. This approach is suggested when more advanced levels are combined, for example, Levels III and IV, since differences are less disparate than between Levels I and II or between Levels II and IV. The students earn credit for the course in which they are enrolled. An example of a Rotating

Levels Approach is a French class in which students in both French II and IV read twentieth century theater and then receive credit for their respective courses. Another possibility for dealing with combined classes as a single unit on the advanced level is the creation of Special-Interest Courses. This option has the possibility of diversifying the curriculum, and courses may be developed around student or teacher interests. The effect of this strategy is the building of electives from which the students choose at the advanced levels, e.g., French for Travelers, Spanish Literature of the Golden Age,
e.g., French for Travelers, Spanish Literature of the Golden Age,
Italian Art, Advanced Composition and Conversation.

When only a few students choose to study at the advanced level, one further option is Independent Study. Objectives must be clearly defined for the student, parents, guidance counselors, and even principals. The measure of evaluation that will be used must also be clearly understood by the student from the outset. In some instances, students may work in the school library, at home, or perhaps in the language laboratory. Periodic meetings between the teacher and students are imperative to provide continual guidance, feedback, correction, and a sense of evaluation.

To date, the most reasonable approach offered by teachers for those classes where differences in linguistic and communicative ability are paramount is the Split-Period Approach. Quite simply, the teacher divides the class into two groups (if two levels are combined), and then shares the class time between them. In order to implement this strategy successfully, three cardinal principles are offered by researchers: (1) each group should know what is required of it daily; (2) each group must be told where it is to work in the classroom and when it will be its turn to work with the teacher; and (3) no group should be involved in busywork. Researchers encourage teachers to experiment with various possibilities for dividing class time. For example, the upper level students might make a presentation to the lower level. The teacher could also lead both groups in a single activity but require different levels of responses. Or, each level can be asked to work separately during some or all of the class period. In other words, a 50 minute class period need not always be divided into 25 minutes for each group. Depending on the nature of instruction, the teacher might choose to work with one group for two or three consecutive days while the other group completes a long-range project on reading or culture. The procedure could be reversed on alternate weeks. However, those currently practicing this Split-Period Approach do urge that teachers build in at least one shared activity a week so as not to lose the sense of community and cooperation. There are many activities that even the most disparate groups can share: songs, rhymes, games, group competitions, skits, guest speakers, or question-answer sessions. Underlying this Split-Period Approach, however, is the assumption that not all activities need to be teacher-led. Students can and should be asked to prepare dictées, culture capsules, review grammar drills, vocabulary lists, etc. Teachers of multi-level classes must learn to make maximum use of their time which means giving students more independence as the year progresses.

Allowing and encouraging student participation in the creation of classroom exercises is far from synonymous, however, with individualization of instruction. Researchers concur that turning to individualization of instruction as a possible coping strategy for combined classes has led to very little more than frustration for the teacher with multiple daily preparations, sometimes in two subject areas, on top of his/her multi-level class. Teaching full-time does not allow for the creation of individual learning packets or pretests and post-tests or complicated record keeping. Generally speaking, research suggests that when multi-level classes are the issue at hand, individualization is a possible answer only if the process has been completed for the levels involved prior to their being scheduled for the same class hour.

Rather than individualization of instruction, researchers suggest that the physical burden placed on the teacher can be eased through peer teaching and differentiation of staffing. With respect to peer teaching, upper level students might be used to coach lower level ones in the classroom, or advanced students can be assigned to work with less-advanced ones and even receive credit for their work. A program of differentiated staffing makes use of student teachers, community members who are native speakers of the language, retired foreign language teachers, or paraprofessionals proficient in the language. Volunteers could be located through a community-wide survey.

Summary

At this time, it appears that multi-level classes will be with us until a dramatic increase in enrollments dictates otherwise. Virtually no evidence exists that suggests that multi-level class structuring results in improvement in specific skill areas. Indeed, common sense dictates that single-level classes maximize foreign language acquisition and that multi-level ones are seen as burdens for both teachers and students. However, until school districts are willing to commit themselves to "one level/one class," researchers will continue to search for effective ways to deal with combined classes in a creative and positive fashion. If teachers are faced with this challenge, we urge them to be flexible in course structuring and to provide *meaningful work* for students. Whether a teacher chooses a Split-Period Approach, Individualization or Independent Study, Mini-Courses, or Rotating Levels will depend to a large degree on which levels have been combined and the needs of particular students. We cannot wish this situation away. Thus, all teachers currently involved in instruction of a multi-level class are strongly urged to share their successes and failures with others so that no one teacher feels unprepared to face this real, day-to-day problem.

Suggested Reading

Brannon, R. M., & Cox, D. E. (1978). Coping with Real Problems in the Secondary Schools. In G. A. Jarvis (Ed.), *An Integrative Approach to Foreign Language Teaching: Choosing Among the Options* (pp. 160-164). ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series, 8, Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co.

A general discussion of strategies and options for teaching combined classes.

Hunter, H. B., & Burr-Harrison, P. (1979). Look What They've Done to My Class, Ma! *Foreign Language Annals*, 12, 425-428.

A very positive discussion of the challenge of teaching multi-level classes emphasizing materials, equipment, group dynamics, and possible curricular reorganization.

Levy, S. L. (1978). Meeting the Challenge of the Multi-Level Class. *Language Association Bulletin, 29*, 25-26.

A teacher's view of how to approach combined classes with flexibility and dedication.

Levy, S. L. (1982). *Teaching Multi-Level Classes*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 221 056)

A discussion of the causes of multi-level classes and guiding principles for effective organization and differentiated staffing.

Strasheim, L. A. (1978). The Issue: Multi-Level Classes. *Foreign Language Annals, 12*, 423-425.

An analysis of various formats for organizing combined classes and a vigorous discussion of the importance of organizing pre-service and in-service sessions on multi-level classes.

Strasheim, L. A. (1982). *The Multi-Level Foreign Language Class: Some Coping Strategies*. (Taped interview in the series, *Education in the 80's: Foreign Languages*. Charles R. Hancock and C. Edward Scebold, co-ed., National Education Association, 1982).

The speaker offers very concrete techniques easily implemented in the classroom and practical ideas for helping teachers face combined classes, on a day-to-day basis, as positively as possible.

Grouping Techniques

Question

I hear other foreign language teachers talking about having students work in groups. Last year as a first-year teacher, I tried very hard to establish good discipline in my classes and feel that I succeeded. Now I'm afraid of giving up control. Is group work really worth all the trouble and, if so, how can I get my students to work in groups without losing control of the class?

Discussion

Your question is certainly a legitimate one and one not strictly limited to relatively inexperienced teachers. Even teachers who have been teaching for many years may approach group activities with some apprehension and even skepticism. After all, the model of teaching with which most of us are familiar is the lecture-discussion model in which the teacher imparts knowledge to the students and in which even the question-answer or discussion part of a class period is basically teacher-directed. It is not surprising that what is known seems orderly and efficient and that what is unknown may seem chaotic and inefficient.

Much of the information that we have on the use of group techniques in foreign language instruction comes from work done in the 1970's on individualized learning. This research shows that small group work does not have to be chaotic and that, in fact, it has certain advantages over the typical whole-class format. A number of these advantages will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

One of the strongest arguments for the use of small groups in language instruction is that they permit the teacher and students to make more efficient use of time. In the teacher-centered and teacher-directed classroom, all students basically have to proceed at the same pace. Typically, we teach to the middle group and risk boring the brighter students and frustrating the less gifted. When students are working in groups, the quicker learners can do special projects and enrichment activities while the slower students do remedial work. When the groups come back together as a whole class, the less-gifted learners will have had a chance to catch up with their more talented peers.

The time factor is especially crucial for practicing the oral skills. In a fifty-minute class period devoted entirely to oral question and answer practice, a teacher with twenty-five students can devote only two minutes to each student. During those two minutes, it is likely that the teacher will be talking half the time. Thus, each student's speaking time will be approximately one minute in length. If, on the other hand, the class were divided into pairs or small groups, each student's opportunity to participate in oral work would be increased dramatically.

In addition to increasing practice time, small group work has been shown to be successful in reducing fear of speaking and other sources of tension, in increasing involvement and participation on the part of all students, and in allowing the teacher to become aware of individual strengths and weaknesses on the part of each learner. This last outcome assumes that as the students converse in groups, the teacher circulates among them observing and noting the problems of individual learners as well as those mistakes that seem common to a number of members of the class. Such observations, which are not so easily made during whole-class work, can serve as the basis of more structured language practice to be carried out either by the entire class or by students working once again in groups or pairs.

The smallest small group is the pair, and research seems to indicate that the largest manageable small group consists of from five to seven students. Obviously, the pair permits more participation of individuals than a larger small group, and the students are more likely to stay on task because they have only each other to depend on. Disadvantages of pairing are lack of variety and the possibility that a student may feel that he or she is "stuck" with an unsuitable partner. Groups of five to seven seem to be ideal in that they provide for adequate verbal interaction and a variety of personalities and talents. As group size increases so does the likelihood that one or more members of the group will participate minimally and that the group may not stay on task. The article by Ciotti listed at the end of this discussion gives advantages and disadvantages of four different arrangements for groups of five.

The size and type of group may vary according to the group's purpose. For some activities, homogeneous ability grouping may be desirable; however, there is always the danger that, if this is the only type of grouping used, one group will be singled out as the "dumb" group. Grouping according to interest rather than ability avoids placing a stigma on weaker students. This type of grouping is particularly appropriate for cultural projects. For many skill-oriented activities heterogeneous grouping also produces positive results in that weaker students can learn from stronger ones and that stronger students can feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in having helped their fellow students. Furthermore, the strongest student in a group whose task is to transcribe the contents of a tape may not be the strongest in a group whose task is to discuss orally the advantages and disadvantages of different professions. Thus, if the teacher throughout the year uses various combinations of pair and group work to accomplish a variety of purposes ranging from the practice of predictable drills and exercises to much freer linguistic and cultural activities, each student is likely to find success in some situations. Flexibility in grouping would, therefore, seem to be recommended.

Flexible grouping assumes, of course, some whole-class or large-group work. Small-group work can alternate with whole-class work during the same class period, or an entire class period of even an entire week can be set aside for small-group work only. The amount of time devoted to such work will depend upon how comfortable the teacher feels about group work, the nature of the tasks to be accomplished, and how well the students work in this setting.

Ensuring that students work efficiently in groups is largely a matter of careful planning and preparation on the part of the teacher.

Successful group work usually cannot be improvised at the moment that an inspiration strikes. Rather, the teacher must make sure that directions for the group activity are thought out well in advance. In some cases, it may be desirable to do a "walk-through" of the activity in advance in order to identify points that might not be clear to the students and to arrive at an estimate of the time needed for the activity. Teachers inexperienced at group work may want to experiment first with a small advanced class before introducing group work into a large elementary or intermediate class. They should not forget, however, that there is actually a greater need for group work at the lower levels where class size is usually larger.

Let us take, for example, an elementary class of twenty-six students who are studying foods, and particularly how to order food in a restaurant. If all the work on this lesson is done in a large group, the students will have very little opportunity for the kind of oral practice that would prepare them for using the language of foods in a realistic way. A combination of large and small group work would increase their opportunity for oral practice and no doubt their motivation as well. Here is how such an activity might proceed: with the whole class together, the teacher reviews structures and vocabulary associated with ordering from a menu. As all students look at the same menu, the teacher asks such questions as: "If you were a waiter, what would you say first to your customer?" and "How would you tell the waiter that you wanted a tomato salad to start with?" After preparing the students in this way, the teacher gives complete instructions for the group activity to follow. These instructions ideally will include the description of what is to be accomplished within the small group and brought back to the whole class. Here is a sample script:

> For this activity, you will be divided into pairs. Each of you will have a menu and you will take turns playing the role of waiter and customer. If you are the waiter, the questions you ask will be cued by the headings on the menu. Circle on your menu the items ordered by your partner as you will be expected to report this to the whole class when we come back together. Remember that the two of you will take turns being the waiter and the customer. You will have fifteen minutes to accomplish this task.

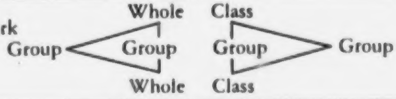
At this point the teacher assigns students to work together and ensures that they work productively by circulating among them. As a variation on this procedure, students could be first divided into pairs and then given dittoed copies of the directions. For teachers who are concerned about classroom control and discipline, the first procedure is probably preferable.

Figure 1 illustrates the three stages of the activity described above. We have seen how an activity involving pair work might progress through these stages. This same procedure could also be used with small groups, for example, with a class of twenty-five students, divided into five groups of five, who are learning how to describe people. During Step I the teacher reviews the names of features of the face, hair and eye color, etc., by showing pictures of faces and asking students to describe them. Following this, students are told that they will be divided into groups and that each group will be given one of five similar pictures of faces. The task of each group will be to describe its picture so well that the other students will be able to pick it out from among several similar pictures. Each group will need to select a "scribe" to put the ideas of the group into writing and later to read the description aloud to the whole class. This constitutes Step III.

Figure 1. Procedure for Group Work

I. Step One: Linguistic preparation; directions for activity; assignment to groups.

II. Step Two: Group or pair work



III. Step Three: Follow-up; reporting back to class.

The first group activity that we examined involved primarily listening and speaking along with a minimal amount of menu reading. The second focussed on oral and written composition followed by listening comprehension during the follow-up activity. Thus, group activities can be designed to involve all language skills. Grouping techniques are particularly important for oral communication, however. Numerous suggestions for small-group oral work are found in the suggested readings that follow this discussion.

Summary

Small group work has been shown to increase class participation and particularly to expand the opportunities for each student to practice the language orally. If small group work is carefully planned, the teacher need not worry that the students will fail to stay on task. The types and sizes of small groups should be determined by the purposes for which they are to be used. It seems likely that a combination of whole class, small group, and pair work will produce results superior to the whole-class-only format. Certainly, the variety should be welcomed by both teacher and students.

Suggested Reading

Ciotti, M. C. (1969). A Conceptual Framework for Small-Group Instruction in High School. *Foreign Language Annals, 3*, 75-89.

Identifies four predominant patterns of communication within groups: the circle, the wheel, the Y, and the chain. Discusses advantages and disadvantages of the groupings.

Joiner, E. G., & Westphal, P. B. (Eds.) (1978). *Developing Communication Skills*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Includes a number of articles that describe group techniques for practicing oral skills. Examples are the strip-story, the self-directed dialogue, communication games, and conversation and interview cards.

Moskowitz, G. (1978). *Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Class*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Defines and describes numerous humanistic exercises, many of which are designed for small groups. Exercises are classified according to parts of speech emphasized and to verb tenses and moods utilized. Appendices give vocabulary and expressions of feeling in seven languages.

Stoller, P. H., Lock, J. T., Wilson, V., & Wattenmaker, B. (1974). *Real Communication in French*. Saratoga Springs, NY: National Humanistic Education Center.

Gives specific instructions for affectively-oriented oral communication exercises to be carried out in groups. Examples are given in the language and are classified according to which structures and parts of speech are emphasized.

Wilson, V., & Wattenmaker, B. (1973). *Real Communication in Spanish*. Upper Jay, NY: Adirondack Mountain Humanistic Education Center.

Same as above but in Spanish.

Pacing and Time

Question

How important is the role of time in foreign language learning? Do students learn more or better if they are exposed to a foreign language for longer periods of time? Does the frequency of the contact with another language make a difference? That is, should the time available for language study be compressed (i.e., more hours per week), extended (i.e., more years of study), or both? What about the pacing of instruction? When we try to "cover the textbook" with all students at a set pace, are we using class time most effectively? How can a teacher allow learners to work at their own pace and still be sure that everything gets covered which the teacher is expected to cover during the year?

Discussion

One of the most often stated pleas which foreign language teachers have made to school and college administrators is for more time for language learning. It has almost become part of our professional folklore that "If only the students could study French for four years instead of two, they would really be fluent in the language," or "If Spanish were taught five days per week instead of three, students would master the language."

Some of the most significant research in education has considered the variable of time for learning. In 1963 John B. Carroll, then of Harvard University, published an article entitled "A Model of School Learning." Carroll identified five factors which seem to make a difference in whether students achieve well in the classroom or not. And when we realize that the discipline which Carroll used in his study was foreign language learning, the results become especially valuable for us. Carroll's five factors were the following:

(1) *Aptitude.* This took on importance in relation to the amount of time learners spent. That is, learners with high aptitude needed less time to master a learning task; learners with low aptitude needed greater amounts of time for the same task; and learners with very low aptitude needed an amount of time so large that, for all practical purposes, they appeared not to be able to learn the task at all.

(2) *Perseverance.* This referred to the learner's willingness to put in sufficient time on his or her learning task, and is related to the learner's motivation for learning and attitudes toward what is to be learned.

(3) *Opportunity to Learn.* This factor referred to the amount of time which teachers and educational institutions give to learners to complete and demonstrate their learning. In general, conventional education places limits (boundaries) on an individual student's opportunity to learn. Teachers allow just so many days or weeks to "cover a chapter in the book," and just so many minutes to demonstrate achievement on a test. ("Time's up! Put your pencils down! Pass your test papers to the front of the room!") Grades are given out every so many weeks and learners are usually required to have completed a common amount of learning (with the expectation, of course, that the quality of that learning will vary enormously from one student to the next).

(4) *Quality of instruction.* In the foreign language classroom, quality of instruction has a built-in temporal component. Effective instruction is *sequenced* and *organized* in specific ways. We traditionally teach the present tense before we teach the present perfect. Textbooks organize learning content temporally as well as thematically. If we did not follow a temporal progression of some sort, our instruction would be deemed slipshod or disorganized. One may argue (as some scholars have) that the division of language into components to be presented and taught in some predetermined sequence is a violation of the "natural way" human beings learn language. Nevertheless, given available materials for learning and teaching foreign languages, teachers may be expected to continue to sequence their instruction and to continue to make temporal decisions about what constitutes "Level One" and "Level Two." And the quality of what we offer to students will continue to take such time factors into account.

(5) *IQ*. Of the five factors in the Carroll model, only the learner's general intelligence — IQ — is totally unrelated to time. And, interestingly enough, IQ has never been found to be a terribly powerful factor in foreign language achievement. It is simply not the case that learners must be very intelligent to *learn* a foreign language, though it is possible that they need to be quite bright to be *taught* one in the classroom setting.

The Carroll research has had profound impact on education in general and on foreign language teaching specifically. It has served as the basis for the work in mastery learning strategies developed by Benjamin Bloom and his associates at the University of Chicago. The message of the Carroll research is that time for learning is crucial, and that different learners need different amounts of time to do a comparable job of learning a foreign language, or anything else in the curriculum.

Other things being equal (and in education they rarely are!), the more time learners spend engaged in language study, the better their learning. This is true both intensively (i.e., number of minutes per week) and extensively (i.e., number of semesters or years of study). Research has not indicated any *optimum* amount of time for language instruction. How many hours per week a learner should ideally spend in the language classroom is a function of the goals of the language program, as is the total time (number of years) that language learning should occupy. It takes much longer, as every language teacher knows, to produce fluent speakers of a language than fluent readers. A language teacher who cannot alter the available time for language instruction should select those goals which are realisitc and achievable within the time available.

In recent years educators have realized that the provision of time for learning itself may not be sufficient. What seems to be at least as important as the amount of time provided is the *way that time is used* in the classroom. The amount of *engaged time* — i.e., time spent in actual language practice — is often quite different from what we may call the amount of *allocated time* (the amount provided by the teacher or educational institution). In other words, how we spend that fifty-minute period is at least as significant as the number of fifty-minute periods we have to spend! This concept of *engaged time* — also called *time on task* — varies enormously from classroom to classroom. A fifty-minute language lesson in one classroom may lose ten or more minutes to administrative matters (taking attendance, filling out forms, collecting or passing out papers, etc.). Of the forty minutes left, the teacher may use the target language only half of the time, or may do 75 percent of the total talking in the classroom (not an uncommon event!).

Even under ideal circumstances (where almost no time is "lost" to administrative matters and where students practice using the target language for the full period), the amount of ***time on task*** is affected by such factors as attention span, motivation, mood, etc. Learners may sit there and stare at their language teacher while their ***minds*** are light years away. ***Time on task*** is thus an issue not only of the organization of instruction, but also of ***motivation***. And time not spent on task is basically time wasted, at least as measured by the yardstick of language achievement.

What kinds of activities keep students on task? Unfortunately, there are different ones for different learners. Research has suggested that there seems to be an optimal attention span which individuals will commit to any learning task. The teacher who sticks with the same activity too long runs the risk of turning off that attention for many learners. Alas, research has not told us — and probably can never tell us — how long each individual's attention span is. The effective foreign language teacher seems to be the individual who switches the focus of learning to a new topic before students lose interest (but not so quickly that learners fail to grasp the point of the learning).

Learners have always learned at their own pace. This is a fact of life with which educational systems in general have failed to come to grips. There are perhaps valuable reasons for the lockstep methodology of ***mass instruction*** — often called "teaching to the middle of the class" — but maximizing learning among a group of two dozen or more heterogeneous learners is not one of them! If we are really honest, we will admit that the only one who really "covers the textbook" in the assigned amount of time is the teacher! "Covering the text in a set amount of time" is a useful way of sifting out an academic elite — those students who become labeled "good learners" — but is an inefficient procedure for assuring the development of language competence — not to mention performance — in ***all*** students who take our courses. For that reason, many scholars have recommended that teachers allow learners — indeed, encourage learners — to ***learn at their own most efficient and effective pace.*** This has become the most common form of individualizing instruction in the United States.

When language teachers attempt to "follow the syllabus" and "cover the lesson" in a set amount of time, they run the risk of ***boring*** (and thus diminishing the motivation for learning of) those very gifted learners who are capable of grasping the central points of the lesson in considerably less time, and of ***losing*** those slower learners who require more time (and often more direct teacher assistance) to grasp the points of the lesson and who accordingly fall further and further behind with every new lesson. And given the sequential nature of our textbooks and teaching, the learner who gets lost early in the game is probably lost for good!

It is possible to hold all learners accountable for the same quantity of learning within a semester or year and still allow for variation in pacing. This can be done by establishing upper boundaries beyond which self-paced learners may not go within any grading period. Those learners who finish early and demonstrate mastery of the material to be learned may engage in other activities for extra credit or for enrichment. They also may be used as "teaching assistants" to help the teacher with those slower students who need more direct assistance in order to master their learning within a finite time span. By providing direct help to those students who most need it — while simultaneously not interfering with the successful learning of those who require little or no teacher intervention — the language teacher utilizes classroom time most efficiently and effectively, and student opportunity to learn is maximized.

Summary

Time for learning is a critical component in the mastery of a foreign language. Many students fail to commit sufficient time to their language learning tasks, either because they are not adequately motivated to do so or because the teacher or educational institution fails to provide them with enough time to complete and demonstrate their learning. But time itself, however vital, is not sufficient. At least as important as the provision of time is the way that time is used. The concept of ***engaged time*** (or ***time on task***) is critical for learning. To provide fifty minutes a day, five days per week, of French instruction may mean little if that time is poorly used or if students fail to concentrate on their learning tasks. The fact that learners have always learned at their own pace, despite the usual requirement to "cover the lesson in X days," is reason to provide learners with the means to learn at their most efficient and effective rate within the conventionally structured language program. Various possibilities for doing this exist under the general heading of "individualizing instruction."

Suggested Reading

Altman, H. B., & James, C. V. (Eds.) (1980). *Foreign Language Teaching: Meeting Individual Needs*. Oxford, England: Pergamon Institute of English.

The proceedings of an international conference examine student pacing and other variables which affect individual success in the language classroom.

Carroll, J. B. (1963). A Model of School Learning. *Teachers College Record, 64*, 723-733.

Carroll's article posits five factors which account for mastery learning in the school classroom. His research was carried out in foreign language classroom settings. This article has had monumental impact on education in the last twenty years.

Nerenz, A. G. (1979). Utilizing Class Time in Foreign Language Instruction. In D. P. Benseler (Ed.), *Teaching the Basics in the Foreign Language Classroom: Options and Strategies* (pp. 78-79). Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co.

Report of a study of how foreign language classroom teachers use their allotted time (for grammar, for speaking practice, etc.), and how much time is spent in the target and native languages. Recommendations follow.

Nerenz, A. G., & Knop, C. K. (1983). Allocated Time, Curricular Content, and Student Engagement in the Second-Language Classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 39*, 222-232.

A detailed report of a study of teachers' use of time (instructional time and "transition time") and of the impact on student outcomes. Time spent on different language skills is compared.

Language of Instruction

Question

(1) Next year I start my first job as a foreign language teacher, and I am really nervous. My methods teacher talked a lot about communicative competence, but I am still not sure how much I should use the foreign language in class or how much I should expect the students to use the foreign language. I want the students to learn to speak the language, but I do not want to scare them nor to discourage them.

(2) I have been teaching for many, many years. I am supposed to be an experienced teacher, but I still have so many questions. Everyone seems to be talking now about communicative competence, but how do I teach that? Should I speak only the foreign language in class? Should I force the students to speak only the foreign language in class?

Discussion

The question of how much foreign language to use in the classroom concerns all of us who teach foreign languages. Our intuition tells us that students must hear the foreign language in order to be able to understand it and to practice speaking it in order to develop any degree of functional fluency. Yet, we are haunted by the need we feel for the students to learn the grammar and by the students' blank stares when they do not understand what we are saying. What do we do? Some of the more recent theorists such as Krashen and Terrell make a distinction btween foreign language *learning*, which involves the conscious learning of the elements of language, and foreign language *acquisition*, which entails the subconscious, osmosis-like process of native language development. To some extent the answer we give to the question depends upon our choice of classroom activities. If we choose to emphasize *learning*, we teach the components of language. If we choose to emphasize *acquisition*, we devote the class period entirely to communication activities.

If we decide to teach grammar, the first decision to be made is whether we should use the native language or the foreign language to present language rules. Another alternative, of course, is to teach grammar rules inductively through examples and drills without resorting to grammatical explanations. The results of reported research studies tend to support the following conclusions:

(1) Students at an abstract reasoning level, who generally want to know why, prefer and benefit more from grammatical explanations presented in the native language.

(2) Students at a concrete, operational thinking level, who feel less need for explanations, prefer and benefit more from inductive drills conducted in the foreign language.

(3) Most teachers prefer to explain grammar in the native language, although some achieve excellent success with drill classes conducted in the foreign language.

The implications of these points are that students and teachers in classes that stress grammatical explanations will probably be more successful if the grammar is taught in the native language. On the other hand, students and teachers who prefer classes based on inductive drills can spend a much higher percentage of class time in the foreign language.

The next step in most foreign language classes is to practice the grammatical patterns in drills and/or exercises. What type of practice is most beneficial for the development of functional language skills? Conclusions of research studies indicate the following:

(1) Once students understand the grammatical concept being learned, drills are of little value.

(2) Practice in communication is superior to noncommunication drills or exercises.

We conclude from these studies in language learning that the amount of time spent in class using the foreign language is not so crucial as the type of activity. Use of the foreign language *per se* may not automatically insure communicative competence. Conversely, if we decide to focus solely on communication activities in the classroom, both the amount of time spent in the foreign language and the type of practice are important. First, theorists hypothesize that language acquisition must be based on large quantities of "comprehensible input." The term "comprehensible input" is based on the premise that students must acquire a corpus of material in the foreign language before they can be expected to use that language. The implication is that students must be able to understand most of what they are hearing or reading. The stipulation of comprehensibility requires that teachers restrict the linguistic level of the language they use to a level slightly higher than that of their students, and there is some evidence that teachers indeed do use a simplified language similar to that of "foreigner talk" or "baby talk" registers when they talk to their students in class.

One tenet of the natural approach related to the comprehensible input hypothesis is that students be permitted to respond in their native language until they feel secure enough to answer in the foreign language. The belief is that production is based on the amount of comprehensible input that students have absorbed, that the rate of absorption varies, and that teachers should not foster the development of negative attitudes toward foreign language acquisition, or learning, by forcing students to produce messages in the foreign language before they feel ready to do so.

Therefore, teachers and students following an acquisition approach seek to use the foreign language as much as possible in the classroom. Teachers use language slightly beyond the students' linguistic level most of the time, and students use the foreign language when they have a sufficient corpus of language with which to communicate and when they feel comfortable using the foreign language.

Summary

The amount of language that we use in foreign language classes depends to a large extent on what we are seeking to accomplish. If our goal is to teach grammar rules, the most favorable approach for many students seems to be grammatical explanation in the native language. Other students seem to achieve more via grammar drills conducted in the foreign language. If our goal is to emulate the first language acquisition process, the hypothesized approach is to provide large quantities of comprehensible input and to encourage the students to produce messages in the foreign language when they feel ready.

Suggested Reading

Henze, V. M. (1973). Linguistic Register of Foreign Language Instruction. *Language Learning, 23*, 207-222.

The author reports that foreign language teachers adjust the level of language used to the linguistic level of their students.

Jarvis, G. A. (1971). A Comparison of Contextualized Practice with Particularized Referents vs. Practice with Generic Meaning in the Teaching of Beginning College French (Doctoral Dissertation, Purdue University, 1970). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 31*, 4037A.

The author studied the effect on achievement of drill versus contextualized practice.

Joiner, E. G. (1977). Communicative Versus Non-Communicative Language Practice in the Teaching of Beginning College French. *The Modern Language Journal, 61*, 236-242.

In this study the investigator examined the relative effectiveness of communicative versus non-communicative oral language practice.

Krahnke, K. J., & Christison, M. A. (1983). Recent Language Research and Some Language Teaching Principles. *TESOL Quarterly, 17*, 625-649.

The authors survey relevant research on comprehension and linguistic input.

Krashen, S. D. (1983). Applications of Psycholinguistic Research to the Classroom. In C. J. James (Ed.), *Practical Applications of Research in Foreign Language Teaching* (pp. 51-66). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

The author explains his five hypotheses about second-language acquisition.

Levin, L. (1972). *Comparative Studies in Foreign-Language Teaching*. Stockholm, Sweden: Almquist and Wiksell.

The author reports on a series of studies designed to compare audiolingual and cognitive approaches to the teaching of foreign languages.

Terrell, T. D. (1977). A Natural Approach to Second Language Acquisition and Learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, *61*, 325-337.

The author outlines the natural approach to foreign language acquisition and learning.

Terrell, T. D. (1982). The Natural Approach to Language Teaching: An Update. *The Modern Language Journal*, 66, 121-132.

The author updates the above and includes extensive references.

Methodological Approaches

Question

Most older experimental studies involving direct comparisons of methodologies or teaching approaches have been inconclusive. How can a teacher objectively analyze different approaches? Are there any available criteria for making such comparisons? I am particularly interested in being able to do this since it seems we have more new methods to choose from today than ever before. Also, many of the less traditional methods seem to be gaining in popularity. Have any new studies been conducted as to their effectiveness?

Discussion

In the comparisons which have been made of methodologies, researchers and others have looked at approaches from different points of view. To a great extent, this accounts for the inconclusive results. For example, the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, the Natural Method, the Confluent Approach, and Community Language Learning have been viewed by some as "radical" approaches. On the other hand, other researchers have designated Total Physical Response, Community Language Learning, and Suggestopedia as "communicative approaches." Still others have grouped Community Language Learning, the Silent Way, and Suggestopedia together as primarily "interactional" in nature. When perceptions differ so widely, it is little wonder that comparisons of these approaches have not yielded solid evidence of a "one best method." On the basis of their teaching philosophies and their own perceptions as to what language is, many language teachers have settled for an eclectic or integrated approach with impressive results. So the choice as to which approach is "best" often rests with the individual teacher.

There are relatively few studies of the newer approaches. But those that do exist indicate thus far that the Total Physical Response method has been very successful. This approach emphasizes physical activity as an aid to comprehension and allows students to produce utterances only when they are ready to do so. A variety of controlled experiments have been conducted in different countries using different languages, and the results have been generally positive in favor of this method.

Another approach which has undergone experimentation is Suggestopedia. Early studies were conducted in Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Soviet Union; more recent studies have been done in Canada and the United States. This method uses various techniques to relax the learner and speed up learning so that large amounts of language material can be acquired in a very short time. Suggestopedia has been used with apparent success in a number of Bulgarian schools to teach a variety of subjects. The method has stimulated a great deal of interest and more and more schools are adopting the approach.

Krashen has developed a set of criteria that can be used to contrast or compare methods. He posits that theory, applied linguistics, research, and intuition can influence method selection. He lists three prerequisites for language acquisition: (1) comprehensible language input; (2) interesting and relevant material that is not grammatically sequenced but is of sufficient quantity; and (3) a low-stress learning situation.

One method which appears to come close to fitting Krashen's criteria is the Natural Approach, designed to develop basic communication skills through the stages of comprehension, early production, and emergence of speech. Results of research studies on this method are just beginning to show how effective it really is.

In general, then, experts contend that the above approaches are more effective than the older ones insofar as they provide more comprehensible linguistic input, attempt to keep the student anxiety level low, and use grammar only as it is needed to convey the in-tended message. The following chart, adopted from Krashen, illustrates how his "prerequisites for language acquisition" can be used as critera for judging different approaches.

Comparison Chart of Three Approaches

Judgment Criteria	*Total Physical Response*	*Suggestopedia*	*Natural Approach*
1. Comprehension stressed	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Interesting and relevant	Yes, but constraints due to use of imperatives	Yes	Yes
3. Not grammatically sequential	Does have a grammatical focus, but TPR does not demand this focus	Focus on communication. Certain amount of grammar emphasized in the first month, although no rigid sequence is followed	No deliberate sequencing
4. High quantity of input	Yes. In the form of commands	Yes, but some explanation in L^1, although dialogues dominates session	Yes. The entire class is filled with comprehensible input
5. Low filter level-i.e., low anxiety level	Silent period allowed. Low anxiety level	Main aim is to teach language in low-stress atmosphere	Yes
6. Provides tools for conversational management	No explicit mention	Not mentioned explicitly. Dialogues are realistic	Some very short dialogues are provided

Omaggio presents another system for methodological comparison. Instead of being tied to a particular theory of language acquisition, she proposes that the teacher use the ACTFL guidelines for language proficiency as the main organizing principle for designing classroom instruction procedures.* In other words, the teacher should choose the method or approach (or even the specific instructional technique) as to how well it will help students attain proficiency goals.

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*The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines are the result of a project funded by the International Research and Studies Program of the U. S. Department of Education. The guidelines, published in 1982, consist of both generic and language-specific descriptions of proficiency that range from a survival level to adult professional-level skill. These graduated descriptions are available from the ACTFL Materials Center, P. O. Box 408, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY, 10706, for French, German, and Spanish.

Omaggio lists five hypotheses that relate to how the teacher might best organize instruction if the goal is superior level proficiency. These hypotheses can also serve as evaluation criteria with which to compare methods.

> Hypothesis 1: Opportunities must be provided for students to practice using the language in a range of contexts likely to be encountered in the target culture.
>
> > Corollary 1: Students should be encouraged to express their own meaning as early as possible in the course of instruction.
> >
> > Corollary 2: A proficiency-oriented approach promotes active communicative interaction among students.
> >
> > Corollary 3: Creative language practice (as opposed to exclusively manipulative or convergent practice) must be encouraged.
> >
> > Corollary 4: Authentic language should be used in instruction wherever and whenever possible.

Hypothesis 2: Opportunities should be provided for students to carry out a range of functions (task universals) likely to be necessary for interacting in the target language and culture.

Hypothesis 3: There should be concern for the development of linguistic accuracy from the beginning of instruction.

Hypothesis 4: Proficiency-oriented approaches respond to the affective as well as the cognitive needs of students.

Hypothesis 5: Cultural understanding must be promoted in various ways so that students are prepared to understand, accept, and live harmoniously in the target-language community.

Summary

While the complexity of goals and objectives makes it difficult to compare one method with another, Krashen's criteria for language acquisition provide one way to evaluate key characteristics of various methodologies, and Omaggio's hypotheses can be used as another set of criteria. In the last analysis, though, the teacher's own judgment may be the most important variable.

Suggested Reading

Asher, J. J. (1972). Children's First Language as a Model for Second Language Learning. *Modern Language Studies*, 56, 133-139.

An experiment to determine the complexity of listening comprehension of students.

Asher, J. J. (1969). Total Physical Response Approach to Second Language Learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 53, 3-17.

A paper reporting the results of twenty-one experiments to determine the workability of the Total Physical Response approach.

Bancroft, W. J. (1982). Suggestopedia, Sophrology and the Traditional Foreign Language Class. *Foreign Language Annals*, 15, 373-379.

Techniques are described as well as their application in the traditional foreign language classroom.

Blair, R. W. (Ed.) (1982). *Innovative Approaches to Language Teaching*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

A description of innovative methods of instruction aiming to promote change and experimentation in foreign language teaching.

Finocchiaro, M., & Brumfit, C. (1983). *The Functional-Notional Approach: From Theory to Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

A discussion of both the theoretical basis and the practical classroom application of the functional-notional approach.

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Pergamon Press.

A book summarizing the current state of language acquisition theory, drawing conclusions about application to methods and materials, and describing the characteristics of effective materials.

Omaggio, A. (1984). The Proficiency-Oriented Classroom. In T. Higgs (Ed.), *Teaching for Proficiency, the Organizing Principle* (pp. 43-84). The ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series, 14. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbok Co.

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A discussion of the debate over teaching for accuracy in the foreign language classroom. This article offers many ideas for contextualizing grammar drills and suggests various formats for grammar work that are personalized and communicative.

Racle, G. L. (1979). *Outlines of Suggestopedia Applied to Teaching of Foreign Languages.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 184 306)

An outline of the process of Suggestopedia which recreates in the classroom a situational context wherein students can live and enjoy and in which they can express themselves.

Stroinigg, D. (1975). *Counseling Learning: A Practical Application in Foreign Language Learning.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 135 250)

A description of an intensive summer program in German using this method.

Terrell, T. D. (1977). A Natural Approach to Second Language Acquisition and Learning. *The Modern Language Journal, 61*, 325-337.

An article on communicative competence and foreign language acquisition with guidelines for classroom implementation.

Terrell, T. D. (1982). The Natural Approach to Language Teaching: An Update. *The Modern Language Journal, 66*, 121-132.

Y AVAILABLE

Class Size

Question

In our school district class size is a real problem for foreign language teachers. First, whenever we approach our administrators to discuss the fact that 35 students are too many for a beginning level class, they tell us that there is no "proof" that smaller class size results in improved student performance. And then they point out that if we don't start out with as many as 35 students in the first-year classes, we won't have the necessary enrollment for the more advanced levels, because so many students drop out after the first year. Is there any way that we can back up our requests for more reasonable class sizes in foreign languages, given the fact that we don't have a negotiated contract that might address the issue? Also, has anyone established an optimum size for language classes?

Discussion

Your comments and questions address two very important issues: class size and attrition. Let's leave the question of the latter for discussion elsewhere and focus on the first issue here. For the time being, presume that future course enrollment is not an appropriate reason to justify oversized beginning language classes.

Research on class size is both inconclusive and contradictory, and we cannot say that there is an "ideal" number of students for a class without taking into consideration several factors. As a teacher, you need to ask and answer several related questions, and then determine for yourself the appropriate class size for your own situation.

Question Number 1: What level of instruction is involved — beginning, intermediate, advanced? Generally speaking, the more basic the class, the greater the need for a class size that enables the teacher to work with individuals and small groups during a good part of the class period. Beginning students need varying degrees of attention, and constant reinforcement of accurate language use is critical to their early language development. At the beginning of Level 1, major emphasis needs to be placed on listening comprehension, with actual language production on the part of the students held to a minimum. This means that the teacher is going to need to develop a wide variety of activities that give the students practice in hearing the language and that also enable them to demonstrate their understanding of what they hear. An excellent approach used by many teachers is called Total Physical Response, which calls on students to perform certain activities at the direction of the teacher. One of the books listed at the end of this discussion goes into detail on this procedure, as does one of the articles.

As we move to more advanced levels, students can be expected to assume more responsibility for their own learning, since they are no longer "beginners." The types of activities should change, so that the students note a difference between the first-year and the second-year class. The intermediate course should not be just "more of the same." Instead, at this level, there should be fewer teacher-led activities and more group work. As students become more proficient, the teacher becomes more of a resource person, helping students strengthen particular areas of language use or pursue individual interests in the language. With the greater involvement of the teacher in a variety of learning projects, class size needs to be smaller so that the teacher has the necessary time to work in greater depth with each student.

At the intermediate and advanced levels, there should still be a considerable amount of group interaction, and certainly instruction in the language itself continues. However, by the advanced level, course emphasis has shifted from the development of basic proficiency in the language to the use of the language as a medium for gathering information, personal enjoyment, etc. With respect to types of activities best suited for the different levels, a number of excellent books and articles are available that teachers will find most helpful. Some of these are listed in the Suggested Reading section.

Question Number 2: To what extent will individualized instruction be used in the classroom? For some years now, we have known that there are times when students can work independently of one another and progress at their own rate. Individualized instruction runs the gamut from the completely "packaged" program to the class where there are periodic learning activities that are prepared for use whenever students reach a particular point in their learning, and even to the isolated "cultural unit" used for extra credit.

While we would not encourage teachers to consider individualized instruction as the solution to overcrowded classrooms, the concept does offer a variety of advantages regardless of class size. Similarly, for those teachers who have no alternative to the large classes, individualization may be the only way to provide the students with a positive learning experience.

Question Number 3: What are the objectives of the course? Since the early 1980's, there has been an increasing emphasis on the development of functional oral proficiency in the foreign language classroom. Virtually every study that has been conducted on student expectations affirms that the main thing students hope to get as a result of their training in language is the ability to communicate in the language. In order to capitalize on this student interest, foreign language classes need to be organized to foster communication. Here are some characteristics of a course organized to accomplish this:

(1) The course provides students with the opportunity to practice using the language on a regular basis, under the guidance of the teacher, and in a range of contexts likely to be encountered in the target culture.

(2) The course provides students with the opportunity to carry out a number of functions (asking questions, answering questions, narrating, describing, supporting opinion, hypothesizing, tailoring language to audiences, etc.) that would be expected of someone seeking to interact with the target culture.

(3) The teacher in the class will provide the students with the guidance needed to develop linguistic accuracy from the beginning of instruction.

(4) The classroom atmosphere is relaxed, and students feel that they are accepted as individuals and are not expected constantly to conform to a native-speaker mold.

(5) A variety of sources is used in the classroom to introduce the

students to the target culture on a regular basis so that they will be prepared to understand and accept the ideas, attitudes, and beliefs of the language community.

These descriptions point out the critical role the teacher plays, both in the structuring of the language experience and in the daily interaction with the students. When class size increases to the point that the teacher is unable to work with students on an individual basis, students can no longer be expected to develop competence in the language as a result of their classroom experience.

Question Number 4: Why is there so much objection on the part of administrators to reducing class size? In more and more school districts, class size is becoming a major concern. With up to 80% of district budgets going to personnel, administrators are constantly looking for ways to reduce the number of faculty members in order to reduce budget deficits. As the teacher force becomes smaller, through resignation, etc., the remaining faculty finds itself absorbing more and more students in fewer and fewer sections. Another ploy used to reduce the number of faculty needed is to combine two levels of instruction in the same classroom at the same time. Pedagogically, neither of these approaches represents a viable, long-term solution to the problem. Yet both practices are followed, usually because administrators know that the option facing the teacher is either to teach the class as it is set up by the administrator or deprive the students of the opportunity to study the language. Of the two options, the teacher feels a commitment to the student to do whatever is necessary to enable the student to pursue the discipline. And so the cycle repeats itself, each time diminishing the effectiveness of the instruction and the ultimate satisfaction of the student. The only way to counter this attitude on the part of our administrators is to demonstrate to them that this short-term solution has a detrimental effect on the program as a whole. In other words, we must present a strong rationale to support our contention that reducing staff and increasing class size is an unwise and shortsighted avenue because it weakens the very system it purports to maintain.

Although the findings of research are inconclusive, we do know that teachers and students generally favor smaller classes. Students in smaller classes feel that they receive more individual attention from the teacher, and that their grades are a better indicator of their actual performance. Teachers voice the same opinion, noting that in smaller classes the needs of the students can better be addressed.

It would appear that one of the reasons for the inconclusive nature of class size research is that in certain subject areas and under certain conditions students can be taught as effectively in large classes as in smaller ones. When teachers are lecturing or conducting demonstrations, for example, the physical facilities (which enable students to see and hear the teacher) may well be the only critical factor. On the other hand, when learner-centered instruction is involved, the total number of students with whom the teacher is expected to work is of primary importance.

Administrators tend to make many staffing decisions based on budgetary considerations rather than on sound pedagogical principles. Often, pupil-teacher ratio is cited to demonstrate that classes are not "too large." However, pupil-teacher ratio is often an *inaccurate estimate* of actual class size, because the ratio is determined by dividing the total number of students by the total number of faculty — which may include part-time teachers, special education teachers who have very small classes, counselors, administrators, and other certified personnel who may or may not be involved in actual classroom instruction. When addressing the issue of class size, we must insist that administrators consider specific numbers in specific classes, rather than talking in terms of district-wide or school-wide ratios.

Once attention focusses on an actual class enrollment, we language teachers must be able to describe in very specific terms what students are expected to be able to do when they complete each level of instruction. We must describe equally well the kinds of activities that will go on in the classroom on a daily basis, and we must be willing to talk with our administrators about the subject at hand, considering the attendant problems that come up when efforts are made to reduce class size.

Too often we presume that the whole world is aware of what we hope to accomplish as a result of our instruction. Unfortunately, this assumption is erroneous. Hence, we must state very clearly what we expect our students to be able to do when they complete Level I, Level II, Level III, etc. These outcome statements should reflect not what the student will know about the language so much as what he will be able to do in the language and with the language. For example, we may decide that at the end of Level I the student will be able to identify common classroom objects, articles of clothing, colors, days of the week, months, etc. We may further expect the student to be able to respond with culturally appropriate phrases to greetings, questions relating to likes and dislikes, and other personal data.

At the next level, we may expect students to be able to ask and answer questions on topics of personal interest, narrate and describe concrete objects and situations, and the like. In short, our descriptions should give the parent, or the principal, or the colleague, or the student a very good idea of what the learner can be expected to do in the language as a result of the instruction. Once we are able to describe our programs in this manner, we are ready to talk about the classroom activities necessary to help the student develop these capabilities. As the strategies are described in detail, it should become clear that the kinds of things we will be doing in class cannot be done if there are too many students enrolled.

Summary

In conclusion, students learn to do what they practice doing. If they practice seat work, they learn to do seat work. If they practice filling in blanks, they learn to fill in blanks. If they practice using the language in a functional context, they learn to do that. The size of the class determines what can (and cannot) be done in the class. If the class size prevents the teacher from doing those things that lead to the development of the skills that are identified as necessary and desirable, a problem is present and must be resolved one way or another. As a teacher, you can identify the problem, present the rationale to your administrator, and hope for the type of support that you need to resolve the situation. Hopefully, you will find that the administrator is as interested as you are in promoting quality instruction in the foreign language classroom and will, therefore, work with you toward this common goal.

Suggested Reading

Asher, J. J. (1982). *Learning Another Language Through Actions: The Complete Teacher's Guidebook* (2nd ed.), Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks Productions.

This book describes in detail the concept of the Total Physical Response strategy for teaching language, and makes suggestions for implementation of the approach.

Birckbichler, D. W. (1982). *Creative Activities for the Second-Language Classroom.* Language in Education: Theory and Practice, 48. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

An excellent source book for language-use activities that are communication oriented and that can be used at all levels of instruction. Highly recommended as a personal acquisition for all language teachers.

Boylan, P. C., & Omaggio, A. C. (1979). *Strategies for Person-Centered Language Learning.* Hastings-on-Hudson, NY: ACTFL Materials Center.

This is an excellent collection of activities that can be used at various levels of instruction in the foreign language classroom.

Logan, G. E. (1975). *Individualized Foreign Language Learning: An Organic Approach.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

This is perhaps the best single publication available on the topic of individualized instruction. A must for anyone seriously interested in developing materials for use in a student-centered classroom.

Omaggio, A. C. (1984). The Proficiency-Oriented Classroom. In T. V. Higgs (Ed.), *Teaching for Proficiency, the Organizing Principle* (pp. 43-84). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

An excellent discussion of the characteristics of a language classroom in which students are taught to use language functionally. Very easy to read, and full of down-to-earth, practical suggestions for teaching language at any level.

Reisert, J. E. (1971). Class Size. In L. C. Deighton (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Education* (pp. 157-60). New York: MacMillan Co.

A good general discussion of the issues involved and the scope of research on the topic. Includes a good bibliography of research studies.

Strasheim, L. A. (1984). Achieving Curriculum Fit for that "Horrible" Second Year. In P. B. Westphal (Ed.), *Strategies for Foreign Language*

Teaching (pp. 1-16). Selected Papers from the 1984 Central States Conference. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

An excellent discussion of some of the chronic problems associated with second year language courses, and some very good suggestions for how to improve the intermediate curriculum. Entertaining and insightful reading that places intermediate courses in the larger perspective of the entire sequence of the language offering.

Wolfe, D. E., & Jones, G. (1982). Integrating Total Physical Response Strategy in a Level I Spanish Class. *Foreign Language Annals, 15*, 273-280.

An excellent article that illustrates the effectiveness of TPR in a beginning level Spanish class and suggests ways in which teachers might approach the process in their own classes.

Benefits of Foreign Language Study

Foreign Language Study and Test Scores

Question

Lately there seems to be renewed interest in foreign languages because of belief in intellectual benefits accruing from studying them. For example, many experts are now telling us that a good way for our students to increase their verbal scores on college admission tests is to have them take a foreign language in high school. Since scores on these tests are so important not only for admission to colleges and universities but also for decisions made about scholarships, does foreign language study really contribute to increased test performance? Also, if this is indeed true, does it matter which language one takes, and what role do other factors play such as length of language study and number of languages taken?

Discussion

The underlying issue here is transfer of learning, for foreign language teachers have long had the notion that there are numerous spin-off benefits from their courses: students develop a clearer understanding of English grammar; they increase their mastery of abstract vocabulary; and the study of a foreign language is a good way to improve skill and proficiency in reading and writing. In a larger sense foreign language study promotes what the Germans have called *Sprachgefühl*, an intuitive "feeling for language."

What kind of evidence does exist for supporting these arguments that most of us have made at one time or another? Classicists have probably been the most vocal about the benefits of foreign language learning, and they have attempted to back up their words with empirical studies that extend back to the 1920's. The earlier studies, though, are problematic in terms of proper research design, and results tend to be ambiguous as to any clear *via latina* to improved mastery of English.

The 1970's brought on a new generation of studies, the intent of which was to test more rigorously the claims that the study of Latin at both the elementary and high school levels would result in transfer benefits in English. In general, these studies involved giving pretests to control and experimental groups with standardized tests of English knowledge and then retesting the same groups after the experimental students had studied Latin for periods of a few months to a year or more; students in the control group had followed the traditional curriculum in English. Post-test scores were then compared to see if the study of Latin produced any measurable effect.

Results are quite interesting. The general impression to be gained is that the students who had studied Latin performed better than those who had not been given any such instruction, with progress occurring mainly in the areas of vocabulary, reading comprehension, and spelling.

In some of the studies, though, there may have been problems with matching groups that were really comparable. Also, the Hawthorne Effect may have played a role in results. This can happen when students are conscious of being exposed to an experimental treatment. They then tend to perform better than they normally would if they were unaware of the special instruction. Another question is that in some of the studies the activities that went on in the control classes were not clearly delineated. Thus, if students in the Latin classes were exposed to vocabulary building activities, while students following the traditional curriculum did not receive any other kind of vocabulary practice, superior performance by experimental students on vocabulary tests would be expected and could not be attributed *per se* to the study of Latin.

Another consideration to take into account is that positive results might have been due to an artifact of the tests of verbal ability.

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Approximately one half of the total English vocabulary is derived from Latin, and many of these items are abstract words. Since standardized tests usually include sections requiring students to understand the meanings of abstract terms, those students who had special training in learning the meanings of Latinate roots, cognates, and affixes would be expected to do well. Nevertheless, many of these newer studies do tend to support the claim that instruction in Latin can be used as a vehicle for building vocabulary and is particularly effective for helping students unlock the meanings of English derivatives and cognates.

What about foreign language study and college entrance examinations such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT)? Recent data from the Admissions Testing Program of the College Board show a definite positive correlation between SAT scores and the study of specific subjects, including foreign languages. According to *Profiles, College-Bound Seniors, 1981*, a publication of the Admissions Testing Program, of the 922,919 seniors tested, 13.6% had taken no foreign language courses. For this group, the mean SAT score on the verbal portion of the test was 366; on the math portion it was 409. Students who had taken only one year of a foreign language had slightly higher SAT scores with 378 on the verbal and 416 on the math. Increases for students who had taken two years of a foreign language, however, were more dramatic: 417 on the verbal and 463 on the math. These scores represent increases of 14% and 13%, respectively, over the scores of those who had taken no foreign languages. With each additional year of language study, scores climbed higher, with 504 on the verbal and 535 on the math sections being averages for students who had five or more years of foreign language study under their belts.

Additional correlations were calculated for English, math, biological sciences, physical sciences, and social studies. With the exception of students who had taken two years of a biological science, all students achieved higher verbal and math SAT scores the longer they had studied any of these subjects. The most interesting piece of information for us, though, is that the verbal scores of students who had taken four or five years of foreign language were higher than the verbal scores of students who had taken four or five years of any other subject.

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Data from *Profiles, College-Bound Seniors, 1982*, which is the latest available summary of SAT scores from the College Board, tell pretty much the same story. The table below arrays these results.

Number of Years of Study of Subject and Corresponding Verbal SAT Scores

	Verbal SAT for:*					
No. of Years of Study	*English*	*Math*	*Biological Sciences*	*Physical Sciences*	*Social Studies*	*Foreign Language*
No Courses	359	360	388	371	348	367
One Year	358	349	428	397	361	379
Two Years	350	367	432	439	409	419
Three Years	373	404	416	467	426	453
Four Years	427	441	398	459	435	481
Five or More	458	447	411	453	455	507

*Verbal SAT scores are from the 50th percentile.

Again, sheer time spent taking a subject seems to relate to a better test score, and concentration on foreign languages for periods of four or more years results in the best SAT average of any subject group, *including English*.

Two fairly recent studies have looked more closely into this relationship in an effort to isolate some of the causal variables. At one large midwestern university, comparisons were first made between college students who had not taken any foreign language in high school and those who, according to data from the Student Profile Section of the ACT, had taken up to four years. As was the case with the SAT data discussed above, students with the more extensive foreign language background scored better on the test.

Since a straight comparison between the two groups did not answer the important question of what role native intelligence might have played in test scores, further analysis was undertaken. Based on available information about class standing in high school, overall grade average, and high school program of studies (e.g., business, vocational, or college preparatory), students were divided into two further subgroups: those brighter and those less gifted. These groups were then compared on the basis of years of foreign language study. Results indicated that (1) although the study of a foreign language appeared to help both subgroups, it was the lower group that received the most benefit; (2) the presumed effect of such study was roughly proportional to the number of years of study; and (3) the study of a foreign language had the greatest effect on ACT scores in English. The investigator hastens to add, though, that these results are at best tentative, since the validity of the study was limited by several factors, the most serious of which were sample size and no real certainty that the intelligence variable was controlled.

The most carefully designed and executed study that we have found to date is Eddy's, completed in 1980. The basic question Eddy wanted to answer was whether foreign languages are taken by students who are more verbally gifted in the first place, which would result in higher verbal SAT scores for these students, or whether language study really does have an effect. Several other subquestions were also addressed: (1) Do students who have studied two foreign languages score higher than those who have pursued only one? (2) Do students who have studied foreign language for a lengthy period score better on the verbal SAT than students who have studied foreign language for a shorter period of time? (3) Does the language studied have an effect — that is to say, do students of German or Latin tend to score higher than students of French or Spanish? (4) Does grade point average in foreign language study have an effect on SAT scores?

The student sample was drawn from three large high schools located in the Washington, D.C., area. To control or account for the factor of native intelligence, Eddy gathered data from several "premeasures" of verbal ability. These included students' scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT), both of which are standardized tests routinely administered to measure ability in English before high school.

The original plan for analysis was to divide the sample (N = 440) into two groups consisting of students who had taken foreign language and those who had not, to control statistically for prior verbal ability, and then compare groups. Since the non-language group, however, was extremely small (N = 52), this plan was dropped. An alternate method of analysis was selected which enabled Eddy to answer most of the research questions by predicting SAT scores from the pre-measures of verbal ability. The main drawback, of course, was that the two groups could not be compared directly. (Since most students who take the SAT today plan to go to college and *also* take a foreign language to satisfy admission requirements, it may be practically impossible to find a non-language group with an adequate number of subjects for meaningful comparison). Eddy reported the following results. First, when verbal ability was controlled, students who studied a foreign language for longer periods of time did better on various SAT subtests and on the SAT-Verbal as a whole than students who had studied less foreign language. Second, the study of two foreign languages had no significant effect on SAT scores, unless *length* of study figured in prominently. Third, the particular language studied had no differential effect; and fourth, there was some evidence that higher grades in foreign language study increased the effect of this study on SAT scores, especially the reading and vocabulary sub-scores.

Summary

Where do we stand regarding the initial questions? It does seem that our "folk attitude" about the benefits of foreign language study is supported by empirical data. The often-noted positive correlation between length of foreign languge study and college admission test scores does, upon closer examination, seem to be related to something inherent in language study itself which contributes to the development of native language skill. It could very well be that this "X-factor" somehow makes concrete the concept of linguistic competence or intuition all of us possess so that students with language study have a certain conscious knowledge of English that is tapped during test taking. In order for a transfer of learning to occur, though, one condition must be met: foreign language study must extend over several years. As every teacher knows, development of language skills is a long and arduous process fraught with many difficulties. The reward, improvement in English skills, ought to be a strong enough argument to convince school administrators to institute programs that will enable students to take up to four years of a foreign language, be it French, German, Spanish, or Latin.

Suggested Reading

ADFL Updates, (Feb. 1983), 2 (1).

ADFL Updates is the semiannual news letter of the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages. This issue reports a summary of SAT scores for 1981.

Eddy, P. A. (1981). *The Effect of Foreign Language Study in High School on Verbal Ability as Measured by the Scholastic Aptitude Test — Verbal.* Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 196 312)

This is the most complete study to date, but it exists only on microfiche.

Masciantonio, R. (1977). Tangible Benefits of the Study of Latin: A Review of Research. *Foreign Language Annals, 10,* 375-382.

This article contains information about Latin studies at all levels.

Mavrogenes, N. A. (1977). The Effect of Elementary Latin Instruction on Language Arts Performance. *Elementary School Journal, 77,* 268-273.

The article is a good summary of FLES programs with Latin.

Ramist, L., & Arbeiter, S. (1984). *Profiles, College-Bound Seniors, 1982.* New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

This monograph contains a summary of SAT scores for 1982.

Sherwin, J. S. (1969). *Four Problems in Teaching English: A Critique of Research.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

The first chapter contains a good summary of older studies with Latin.

Timpe, E. F. (1979). The Effect of Foreign Language Study on ACT Scores. *ADFL Bulletin, 11,* 10-11.

Timpe reports on a study where prior verbal ability is taken into account in the relationship between foreign language study and ACT scores.

Foreign Languages and Careers

Question

Many of my students who make good grades in my classes and demonstrate a definite aptitude and talent for learning a second language ask me what career opportunities exist for people who major in foreign languages. They know, of course, that one can become a teacher, translator, or interpreter, but they say that they are not interested in these fields. What is the job market like today for people with a background in foreign languages and does foreign language study really make one a better qualified applicant for certain positions?

Discussion

In the past, many Americans have tended to believe that knowing English, which has long been considered the most international language in the world, is sufficient for all our needs. As a result, there is a too well-deserved world-wide image of Americans as the people who cannot say even the most elementary guidebook phrase in any other language. Many stories have recently been circulated which illustrate the abysmal lack of foreign language skills of most Americans, ranging from the disastrous translation of President Carter's feelings toward the Polish people, to the woes of the Chevrolet Nova in Latin America where "no va" means "won't go."

Fortunately, many of our business, political, and educational leaders are belatedly realizing that the whole world does not speak

English, and that people who do speak English as a second language usually prefer to do business, to negotiate, and even to converse in their native tongues. We are starting to grasp that the rest of the free world will not continue to follow our lead blindly, and that we can no longer dominate other nations economically. In fact, several foreign countries, notably Germany, Japan, and France, are even making substantial inroads into our huge domestic market by investing billions of dollars per year in America. To compensate and to keep pace, we are starting to give a much higher priority to international trade. At the same time, our own society is being internationalized at an ever more rapid pace by the influx, especially in southern and western states, of large numbers of Spanish-speaking people.

As a result of increasing activity in the field of international business, the large inflow of foreign capital into the U.S., our own internationalization, and the expanding awareness of the need for Americans to conduct not only business but also diplomatic relations in the language of the host country, there is a growing need for young Americans who possess skills in foreign languages. Today, however, the need for people with foreign language skills goes far beyond the roles which were traditionally reserved for people trained in languages. Not long ago it was automatically assumed that anyone studying foreign languages as a major field was going to be a teacher, an interpreter, or a translator and had no other career options.

Certainly there is a need for people in those professions, but there will be relatively fewer jobs available for foreign language students who have obtained no other marketable skills. A foreign language major who wishes to pursue a career in business, manufacturing, or some other profession should be able to demonstrate technical expertise in addition to language skills. A second language is usually only a palpable asset when it is combined with a primary profession. Thus, the major opportunities in the future will be for people with training and expertise in a professional field such as engineering, management, computer science, sales, accounting, law, etc., and with ancillary skills in foreign languages.

Learning a foreign language is no longer merely a part of a liberal education or an exercise in grammar and literature. It is now becoming a vital part of the basic preparation for a growing number of careers. The mastery of a second language will greatly aid the individual seeking employment in a country with increasing international interests. Even in those cases where the knowledge of a second language does not facilitate the obtaining of a first job, many graduates report that their foreign language skills often improve their chances of obtaining a promotion and enhance their mobility. The more varied and more highly developed one's skills are, the more options one has, not only for now but also for the future. In short, the student who misses the opportunity to learn a foreign language often closes doors and narrows future career possibilities.

In addition to any technical skills which foreign language students choose to develop, they also have further definite advantages in the job market. In this ever-expanding modern world, communication has become all-important. In a recent study to determine the value of higher education and how it was being utilized in employment, it was found that the courses most frequently recommended as useful in jobs were business administration, English, and psychology. The value of the English courses lay in their teaching of communication skills. Who possesses better communication skills, both oral and written, than the foreign language student? Foreign language courses teach these skills and foreign language majors can justifiably equate their skills with those of English majors.

Foreign language students have developed and refined their skills through study and practice in speaking, hearing, reading, and writing a second language. They generally have a greater feel for language than those who know only their native language. Indeed, foreign language students often have an even better sense of language than do English majors. How many students do you know who have said that they never really understood English until they took a foreign language?

Not many years ago the primary emphasis in language teaching, especially at the college and university level, was literature. However, even while in the mid-1970's many disappointed and disillusioned Ph.D.'s were awaiting their last unemployment checks and wondering where they could turn next, numerous foreign language departments were softening their emphasis on literature by introducing courses with a practical orientation and a heavier emphasis on communication skills. More and more colleges and universities have done this, and now many professors also recognize that the foreign language advisor has the task of acquainting students with the job market. They are now likely to counsel students to hone their language skills as fully as possible and to take courses in a second area of concentration. Thus, students at the high school level can expect in the future to work with academic advisors who are aware of current trends in the job market.

We would like to interject here a note of caution and of encouragement. For years there has been a rather strong tendency for foreign language students to develop a weak self-image. Sometimes they tend to forget their ability to perform a variety of tasks and feel that they are "only a German major" or "a Spanish major," as if their identity derived only from their major subject area and not from the totality of personality. This kind of thinking often lowers and limits one's self-image. Foreign language students should not overlook the expertise they have and should remember that their foreign language skills have been added to all the other talents they possess, building on and enhancing them. They are not "just" French students or Spanish students. They are people with a wide variety of talents and abilities. They must not limit their self-image, but view it positively. Then when they seek employment, they can realize their full potential.

Summary

No longer do people who possess skills in foreign languages need to look only to the traditional fields of teaching, translating, and interpreting for employment opportunities. Career options abound for people who possess expertise in a given professional field and who also have high-level skills in a foreign language.

Suggested Reading

Arnett, M. R. (1975). *Languages for the World of Work: Executive Summary.* Salt Lake City: Olympus Research Corp.

This is a helpful survey of business opportunities for persons with skills in foreign languages.

Hodges, L. H., Jr. (1980). On Commerce and Language Study. *ADFL Bulletin, 11*, 36-37.

This is a reprint of a most enlightening and encouraging speech by the former deputy secretary of the Department of Commerce which gives considerable information about the connection between foreign language skills and the proper role of the United States in the world.

Honig, L. J., & Brod, R. I. (1973). *Foreign Languages and Careers*. New York: Modern Language Association.

This publication is indispensable for all those who are faced with advising students about the value of foreign languages in the real world.

LoBrutto, R. D. (1978). Notes from a Career Counselor in Connecticut. *ADFL Bulletin*, 9, 45-46.

This article is very helpful for pointing out the value of foreign language skills and how to market them.

Tichy, C. (1981). Advising Foreign Language Students on Career Options. *ADFL Bulletin, 12*, 35-40.

This helpful article gives ideas on how to advise students toward alternate fields to complement their foreign language studies.

Appendix

List of Selected Questions and Teacher Concerns

1. Learner variables. Included in this category are topics such as similarities and differences between first and second language learning, predictors of success in foreign language study, and reasons for the high attrition rate among students. Other variables are also mentioned here, variables which have not been traditionally investigated but which from the point of view of the *individual student* affect language learning proficiency. Specific topics follow plus excerpts from survey responses.

   A. *Attrition.*

   > "How do you stop the 60% drop in enrollment from year to year?"
   >
   > "The primary problem that teachers face is the recruiting and retention of students. Any research that deals specifically with the relationship between student retention and method (and curriculum) would be beneficial."
   >
   > "We need information on what goes on in students' heads when they take a foreign language. Why do they drop? Continue? What specific instructional practices produce fear, anxiety, boredom, discomfort? What do students like, dislike about foreign language study? What effects do various correction, testing, and instructional techniques have on students?"

B. *Motivation.*

"Should there be a two-track system? That is, classes where the strongly motivated and college-bound can make excellent progress and classes that the less able and poorly motivated students can attend."

C. *Student as individual learner.* (What role do factors such as student expectations, learning styles, cultural background, etc., play in success of foreign language acquisition?)

"What is the relationship between certain learner characteristics (age, self-esteem, etc.) and certain aspects of foreign language study (pronunciation, vocabulary learning, etc.)?"

"Have student expectations regarding language learning been defined?"

"What research exists on how to prepare a student for foreign language study?"

"What is the student view of foreign language study?"

"The primary problem is one of adapting instruction and goals to an extremely diverse student population. Summaries of research on recognition of learning styles and learner characteristics and techniques for instructional and programmatic adaptation would be most helpful."

"What do we know about teaching foreign languages to the culturally deprived and learning disabled? Can these students profit from foreign language study? How are their learning styles different? What techniques can be used to teach them? What are some of the particular learning problems they might experience?"

"Who are the gifted foreign language learners? How can they be identified? What difficulties might they experience in a class? What distinguishes general giftedness from foreign language talent? What instructional strategies (other than acceleration or advanced placement) can be used to help these individuals develop to their full potential?"

D. *Aptitude.* (What are good predictors of success in foreign language study?)

"Is English or math a better predictor of success in foreign language learning?"

"What sort of pretesting can be done to determine if a student is capable of handling a foreign language?"

E. *Language Acquisition.*

"What methods enhance right-brain learning of a foreign language?"

"What are the implications of brain hemisphere research for foreign language teaching and learning?"

"What are the major obstacles to language learning and how can we help our students overcome them?"

"What role does the student's native culture play in learning a foreign language?"

"What pronunciation, syntactical, and/or lexical errors committed by native English learners of French, Spanish, and German are most irritating to native speakers of those languages?"

"We need more materials based on well-researched information about language production and social context. What behavioral situations elicit what language and why?"

"What is Krashen's theory telling us about language training? What are implications of his theory for teachers?"

II. **Skill development and content.** This section contains two components. The first, skill development, deals with learning vocabulary and structure, as well as gaining proficiency in the traditional four skills. The second area, content, has to do with incorporating cultural aspects in instruction and introducing literature.

A. *Skill development.*

1. *Vocabulary acquisition.*

"Is there any research on memory techniques that facilitate vocabulary learning (imaging, mnemonic devices, etc.)?""Texts need to be rewritten somewhat to incorporate a more functional vocabulary. Has anyone compiled lists of 'survival' words (no smoking, high voltage, e.g.) and frequency charts showing the most commonly used words in any language? (You could be in trouble overseas if you couldn't find the fire exit)."

"Has any work been done on the following: (1) establishing priority areas of vocabulary appropriate to each level, on a practical basis — foods, clothing for Level I; idiomatic and conversational expressions for Level II; perhaps literary terms for Level III — (2) determining how students themselves go about learning and retaining vocabulary words, discovering their strategies, and (3) aiding students in recalling and implementing vocabulary in practical situations by establishing appropriate contexts rather than depending on rote memorization and drill?"

2. *Learning grammar.*

   "What are some surefire techniques for teaching grammar to make it more interesting and exciting?"

   "What is the best sequence for teaching grammar during the first two years?"

   "What are the results of a deductive versus an inductive approach to learning structure?"

   "How can grammar be taught without labels and lectures?"

   "Is it really necessary to put so much stress on teaching grammar, as most teachers do?"

3. *Aural-oral skills.* (How can the student best develop communicative competence or conversational skills of a functional nature? What are some tasks to this end?

   "Since the ability to listen is of such paramount importance in language learning, are there any specific techniques to force the students to listen without the teacher's appearing to be a monster in the eyes of the students? (Power of concentration in some students is totally lacking!)"

   "What is really meant by communicative proficiency? How can we determine or define levels of it? How should curriculum and materials be developed for communicative proficiency?"

   "What is the ratio of student to teacher talk in FL classes?"

   "What are good techniques for making students talk more and teachers less in the target language?"

4. *Reading.*

   "How does the teacher integrate supplementary reading into a sequenced first- or second-year course? Often students don't take such materials seriously; they need so much vocabulary and explanation in order to understand the reading that they're discouraged instead of stimulated. Sometimes (usually) they're insulted by the content of the readings at their level."

5. *Writing.*

"What are some practical ways to help teach essay writing skills to advanced high school students?"

B. *Content.*

1. *Culture.*

"How do we teach language through culture and culture through language?"

"How do we make the best use of culture assimilators, culture clusters, and culture capsules and how do we develop them as part of the curriculum?"

"What are the aspects of culture best suited for learners at various levels?"

"How does one determine the authenticity of cultural concepts in textbooks?"

"Where can teachers go to find cultural information, especially on some of the less-commonly taught cultures of the Francophone world?"

"What sociolinguistic research is available which would help teachers become more knowledgeable about the cultures of the languages they teach?"

"Have any studies been done regarding vocabulary differences between Mexico and Spain, Germany and Austria and Switzerland, etc.?"

2. *Literature.*

"What research has been done in the area of teaching poetry and literature in foreign language classes?"

"When and how should literature be introduced?"

III. **Learning environment.** Topics in this category have to do with how to organize instruction in terms of method and approach. Thus, emphasis is more on the teacher's role. Other areas deal with effects of variables such as class size and pacing on achievement.

A. *Multi-level classes.*

"What is within the realm of the possible when one is forced to accept students from different class levels in one class hour? Are we being dishonest by letting students, parents, administrators, and others think that students are able to accomplish just as much?"

"Is there any *hard* data on the effects of combining two or more levels of students in the same classroom?"

"How does the teacher with five teaching periods per day organize time, space, content, and skill development in a class that has two or three levels of students?"

B. *Grouping techniques.*

"How can foreign language teachers learn how to divide their classes into groups (and feel comfortable about it)? Elementary teachers learn to do this very effectively. This would not just be for multi-level classes but for multi-ability ones, too."

"To what extent does regular use of partner work enhance communicative competence? How many minutes should students practice new structures in a partner setting for maximum benefit? How many times during a 55 minute class period should provision for partner work be made so that students can practice the target language with each other in a nonthreatening environment?"

"How do you keep students on task when you put them into smaller groups for discussion?"

C. *Pacing.*

"Is there any research on pacing? That is, how do you strike a balance between going fast enough for the sharper students and slow enough to give the others the practice they need?"

D. *Use of target language.*

"To what extent should instruction be in the target language, especially at the beginning level: 100%, 90% (that's what we aim at), 80% or less? What brings a greater desire in students to use or communicate in the foreign language: (1) the teacher's insistence on the exclusive use of the target language in class, or (2) a more relaxed attitude by the teacher where he or she will lapse into English to explain a grammar structure or a difficult idiom and also permit students occasionally to use English?"

E. *Methodological approaches.*

"Compare and contrast three of the newer approaches to language teaching (e.g., the Silent Way, Total Physical Response with delayed speaking, Community Language Learning — or any others) and compare results in terms of the effects of these approaches on oral communicative competence."

"What teaching techniques are most useful in beginning foreign language instruction to force students to use higher level thinking skills such as inferencing, synthesizing, and analyzing. How can we influence the creation of commercial materials that include many creative exercises, forcing students to reflect, to imagine, to interpret, to look beyond the obvious?"

"Has anyone ever made an assessment of the effectiveness of the notional-functional syllabus approach?"

F. *Class size.*

"What is the optimal size for foreign language classes — not just recommendations but hard data?"

"How do you adequately deal with a class of 30 for oral discussion?"

G. *Sequencing.*

"Must listening and speaking really come before reading and writing? Could the passive skills, listening and reading, be taught before the active ones with results just as effective?"

IV. **Research-supported benefits of foreign language study.**

"What is the correlation between grades (achievement) in foreign language study and SAT scores?"

"At the national level what are the effects of langauge study on SAT scores?"

"How much language learning goes on in the USA by people who find after high school that they need a foreign language to do their job better? What's the cost? What languages are mostly required?"

"Have any follow-up studies of foreign language graduates been done? If so, what have they shown?"